NEW BABYLON: DISCREPANCIES OF UTOPIA AND POSSIBILITY OF
SITUATIONIST ARCHITECTURES

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ABSTRACT

NEW BABYLON: DISCREPANCIES OF UTOPIA AND POSSIBILITY OF SITUATIONIST ARCHITECTURES

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The project of New Babylon, the foremost imagination of Constant Nieuwenhuys, is still regarded as an incarnation of the ideals of the Situationists over the contemporary city and everyday life. In this regard, an extensive re-reading of New Babylon with its unceasisngly contested positions, is believed to constitute a much broader discussion into post-war avant-garde architecture and urbanism. Beyond all contradictions, some of the critical aspects of New Babylon seems to fade away because such notions as détournement, as explicitly coined by the Situationist International, for instance, were forced into constant misinterpretation. It is, therefore, the notion of détournement has to be revisited as one of the key concepts not only to provide anew theoretical framework for further discussions of "situationist architectures", but also to foster new methodic devices to cope with some of the shortcomings of today's spatial production. It is one of the objectives of this inquiry that with help of the said concept that of détournement, this research questions if bottom-up guerrilla architecture could still be possible as genuinely manifested by the members of the Situationist International.

Keywords: New Babylon, Utopia, Situationist International, Détournement

ÖZ

NEW BABYLON: ÜTOPYANIN ÇELİŞKİLERİ VE DURUMCU MİMARLIĞIN OLABİLİRLİĞİ

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Constant Nieuwenhuys'un en önemli yapıtı olan New Babylon projesi, durumcu enternasyonalin günümüz kenti ve gündelik hayat üzerindeki görüşlerinin cisimleşmesi olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, New Babylon'un süregelen tartışmalı konumuyla beraber yeniden değerlendirilmesi ikinci dünya savaşı sonrası avangart mimarlık ve şehirciliğine daha geniş bir çerçeve kazandıracaktır. Tüm çelişkilerin ötesinde, détournement gibi durumcu eleştirinin bel kemiğini oluşturan bir kavramın yanlış değerlendirilmesi nedeniyle New Babylon'un eleştirel özelliği ortadan kaybolmaktadır. Bu yüzden, détournement kavramı, "durumcu" mimarlık tartışmasının ötesinde günümüz mekânsal üretiminin sorunlarıyla mücadele etmek için de bir araç olarak önerilebilir. Bu çalışmanın amaçlarından biri mekânsal direnişin bir parçası olarak, détournement yardımıyla aşağıdan yukarıya örgütlenmiş bir gerilla mimarlık olasılığını sorgulamaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: New Babylon, Ütopya, Durumcu Enternasyonal, Détournement

To My Family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SI: Situationist International

LI: Lettrist International

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aim of the Thesis

While unrestricted powers of capital plunder the earth and reorganize the urban fabric according to its needs, it also brings about its counter force, a global resistance network. Gathered by the discontent, autonomously organized masses expand the struggle to entirety of fabric of the earth. Space is no longer the mere location in which the struggle happens, it is the subject of struggle. Production of space is more central than ever before to struggle against Capital.

We witness the urge to envisage anew spatial experiment which is manifested through spontaneous carnivalesque moments of occupy protests. However, these miniscule independent experiments present a meager resistance, far from challenging dominant spatial paradigm. Thus, a unitary theoretical framework and definition for an alternative collective spatial production as well as the strategies and tactics for engendering it are essential tasks for struggle against capital. This thesis aims to provide a perspective to achieve these objectives. Aspects of today's spatial struggle have parallels with theories of Situationist International. The critical methods developed by SI are considered to present invaluable contribution for such a task. Thus, the pursuit of what might be the "situationist architecture" is appeared as a way for a unitary praxis of revolutionary architecture.

Spatial struggle of this time and age takes its inspiration from the May 68' protests, particularly its detouring practices and humorous, sarcastic visual language. SI's legacy lies also in this visual language despite their intention to constitute a different avant-garde that surpass the artistic premises. This thesis is an attempt to expand this legacy through spatial production. The SI is considered to have a unique position

among the historic avant-garde, with its awareness of the precedents' failure. Although they followed the previous avant-garde in their scandalous attitude and problematic relationship with radical politics of their time, they tried to distance themselves from the blatant negation that the previous avant-garde championed. Despite the fact that SI ultimately failed and silently abolished itself after the defeat of 1968, situationist theories still offers a stimulating reevaluation for recent years. SI's theories and history have developed over the postwar artistic and political movements. Thus the scope of this thesis will be limited to postwar avant-garde movements, particularly SI and postwar spatial experiments, particularly New Babylon.

To conclude, Investigation of radical alternatives to contemporary production of space constitutes the main objective of this thesis. To achieve this purpose, history and theories of SI is considered as the source of inspiration. As the primary exemplar of the architecture that inspired by situationist ideas, New Babylon stands as both a challenging and stimulating experiment. Therefore, assessment of New Babylon in accordance with situationist principles and utopian thought is considered necessary for such a task to speculate on different architectural experiments. Ultimately, this study means to address these issues to establish a framework for a speculative definition of situationist architecture.

1.2. Contradictory Confrontations with New Babylon

Constant Nieuwenhuys' life time project, New Babylon is chosen as the departure point for a critique of architectural utopias. New Babylon being the embodiment of situationist ideas on architecture and urbanism, still offers a vital reconsideration of architecture via situationist theory. Commenced with the model of a campsite for gypsies, by the accumulation of models, sketches, scale drawings, paintings etc., New Babylon have become the collection of representations of imaginary spaces which encompass over the world.

New Babylon is the space of *Homo Ludens*, the human who plays. Babylonians have to do nothing but drift along different sectors which all having different *"ambiances"* by the virtue of automated production. Elevated structures allow for pedestrian

circulation flow without interruption. Drifting or *dérive* is a way to experience city through a series of different environments, conceiving a collage of spaces. Thus, agglomeration of different spaces creates an alternative city, an alternative reality within the reality.

Perhaps the most important aspect of New Babylon is its modifiability. By the help of mobile surfaces, spaces of New Babylon are adaptable to their users' will. Flexible and kinetic spaces are seen as the means for realization of the creativity of a future nomadic society. Thus, individuals have the chance to create or modify their environment easily. Constant's role as architect then reduced to mediator, providing the tools to create spaces.

Series of other discrepancies becomes apparent as New Babylon becomes concrete. Jean Louis Violeau, in his essay A Critique of Architecture: The Bitter Victory of Situationist International mentions the contradiction between the promise of spontaneous drifting and defined patterns of circulation. He takes it a step further and declares that what practiced in New Babylon is not unitary urbanism but re introduction of the "separate".[1] Indeed, the zoning of life into chapters in New Babylon resembles the zoning of modernist urbanism: Automated production at the ground level, flexible spaces, nomadic living, and leisure at sectors and artificial outdoor living at rooftops.[2] Homo Ludens of New Babylon is separated from the dirt and odor of the production and the fast car traffic as well as the natural elements. Hence, they are trapped inside the sterile space between two slabs, even though these slabs run along the whole surface of the earth. Another point of discontent is that inhabitants of New Babylon are obligated to be spontaneous, ordered to play and available for drifting.[3] This seems to be related with the criticism of Hilde Heynen that one cannot dwell in New Babylon. "Dynamism, permanent change, and

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[1] Violeau, Jean Louis. The Bitter Victory of the Situationist International. In: Goldhagen, Sarah Williams. ed. Anxious Modernisms (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000), pp.253.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Heynen, Hilde. Architecture and Modernity (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT press, 2001), pp. 172-174.

flexibility are in fact ineluctably in conflict with qualities such as peace, repose, and harmony."[4]

The reading of New Babylon offers different narratives according to how it is categorically regarded. First, if we consider it as the representation of a utopic space for the society after revolution as Constant intended, it becomes a static object of an imagined "totality". It appears as the complete negation of capitalist society without the oppression and power structures. When it is compared with its contemporaries, the other visionary projects of architecture such as Allison and Peter Smithson's projects or Archigram and Superstuido's collage work or Japanese Metabolists, formal resemblance as well as the similarity between themes such as flexibility and mega-structural approach is apparent, without the theoretical background or political agenda of New Babylon. Even Le Corbusier, the most famous figure of functionalism that is heavily criticized by Constant, contributed to these with his Algiers project. These similarities hint the dissonance between New Babylon and its theoretical background. Once we forget the post-revolutionary society that somehow overcome the classes by the help of technology, the architectural object is a high tech fantasy that *"radicalizes and idealizes the transitory aspects of the experience of modernity."*[5]

The second way to read New Babylon is to analyze the collection of representations itself. As Heynen states, drawings, sketches and paintings of New Babylon reveal a truth that models have managed to hide- imperfection of utopia.[6] Paintings do more justice to New Babylon than the models, because they represent the disharmonious, uneasy conflict between the restless dynamism of utopia and static banality of the reality.

As Adorno claimed, Once the utopia takes the more concrete form, dogmatic and oppressive character of it prevails.[7] Impossibility of the realization of utopia is also evident in the word itself if we take combination of $o\dot{v}$ and $\varepsilon\tilde{v}$ meaning no and good,

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[4] Ibid. pp. 173.
[5] Ibid. pp.152.
[6] Ibid. pp.175.
[7] Heynen, Hilde. Architecture and Modernity (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT press, 2001), pp. 176.

well in Greek respectively and *τόπος* which means place. Thus it is an ideal place that is too good to be true.

1.3. Theory of Détournement, Heterotopia and Utopia

Situationist critique on urbanism and architecture formulized in the early years of SI and even before SI, by the precedent group Lettrist International. They suggested unitary urbanism to overcome the separation that reign in modern capitalist city. They theorized concepts for the restructuring of the city. The constructed situations and dérive constitute the essence of New Babylon. However, détournement which is the backbone of situationist critique, is absent in New Babylon.

Practice of détournement had already been implemented for several decades when Situationists (then Lettrists) discovered it. Surrealists and Dada were aware of it. However, Guy Debord and Gil Wolman theorized it as a method of conscious critique in an essay titled "Methods of Détournement". It is as simple as multiple object brought together gaining a different meaning, however have traces of their original meaning. Tough, they differentiated previous détournement from the one they yearned for. Duchamp's detourned Mona Lisa was found no longer more interesting than the original for example. Brecht's cuts of classics of theater was much closer to their tendency despite his confinement to boundaries of culture. Détournement at revolution's disposal must have been the unbounded appropriation of the entirety of artistic and literary objects for propaganda purposes.[8]

Architecture of détournement would put all the existing forms of architecture. This experimental phase of architecture would be the complex arrangement of any sort of objects.[9] This might have several connotations. At first, it might imply the collage-like usage of existing architectural forms in production of new architecture. We might also understand that existing architecture, physical built environment, must be

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[8] Debord, Guy-Ernest and Wolman, Gil 'Methods of Détournement' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.9. Originally published in Les Lévres Nues #8, May 1956.
[9] Ibid, pp.13.

subjected to modifications. Appropriation of existing architecture whether it is loaded with meaning or not, is more compatible with the nature of détournement.

If we put utopia aside as the ultimate good place that is unthinkable to achieve as the society in its pure perfected condition, we have heterotopias as the spaces in which all the fragments of society are at once present, "simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted". Heterotopias are realized or localizable utopias, even though it is impossible to specify their site in reality. [10]

We may find similarities between the momentary, heterogeneous nature of utopias and practice of détournement which in fact creates a heterotopia by bringing together seemingly unrelated objects. Thus, the resulting objects is, rather than a static end product, the representation of the moment of creation as well as the objects themselves and the representation of time as their past and present. Thus, the architecture of détournement or situationist architecture as I call is the momentary creation of heterotopic spaces within the boundaries of reality, pushing and extending that reality by appropriating several elements of that reality.

1.4. Resisting Architecture

Heynen's critique for New Babylon unfolds one of the problematics of this thesis. It is challenging to conjure a society, based on randomness and spontaneity while performing the ultimate freedom with absence of any kind of power relations, that comply the norms without the oppressive structures that it implies.[11] The consequential relationship between the future society and its space, utopia is thus represented in a so straightforward way. Similarly, Guy Debord's anticipation of proletarian revolution to lead to reconstruction of the space by the ordinance workers' councils to enable opportunities of play is an evidence of the short-circuit established between the revolution and utopia.[12] Therefore, there is a certain form of oversimplification that lurks around both in the representation of utopia and the negation of avant-gardism.

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[10] Foucault, Michel. 'Of Other Spaces' in Diacritics, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring, 1986), pp.24.
[11] Heynen, Hilde. Architecture and Modernity (The MIT press, 2001) pp.173.
[12] Ibid. pp.174.

After the early years of SI, both the theories of constructed situations and urban experiments related with it were abandoned. Meanwhile Guy Debord and his inner circle were drawn to an increasingly more isolated position denouncing their former affiliates. Learned from the mistakes of the previous artistic avant-garde, they struggled with the issue of "totality". As Debord stated: "One never really contests an organization of existence without contesting all of that organization's forms of language" [13] Hence, they tried to avoid being trapped in the narrow perspective of historic avant-garde. However, they eventually became the adversaries of another fragment of totality far from full-fledged contestation of it.

We might have to position architecture between two prominent stance regarding the role of it in resisting capitalist relations. According view of Tafuri, resistance to dominance of capital is impossible.[14] The dominant ideology needs its own negation to renovate itself in order to survive.[15] Therefore, architectural utopia is a necessary instrument for the benefit of capital.

If we take the other stance, the cultural sphere is not entirely dominated by capital. It is the site for contestation between different social groups, beyond the boundaries of class struggle.[16] Thus, architecture has a chance to produce its own peculiar language within the dominant form of language to challenge the latter.

For we search for an architecture that resist via the methods developed by SI, we must concede that buildings are not monumentalized, invariable objects. For once, we have to admit their consumption is where the forces of everyday life kick in and compliment the still image created by the architect. Therefore, each object of architecture has a certain amount collectivity. According to Maudlin and Vellinga, architects have tried different methods which can be roughly grouped as 'flexible

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[13] Debord, Guy-Ernest. "On the Passage of a Few Persons Through a Rather Brief Period of Time", from "Soundtracks of Two Films by Guy Debord". In: Knabb, Ken ed. trans. Situationist International Anthology (Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), pp.30.
[14] Sargın, Güven Arif. 'Denatured Architecture at the Verge of Capitalist Crisis: Bringing the Resistance in'. Retreived from https://gasmekan.wordpress.com/
[15] Tafuri, Manfredo. Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), pp.50.
[16] Sargın, Güven Arif. 'Denatured Architecture at the Verge of Capitalist Crisis: Bringing the Resistance in'. Retreived from https://gasmekan.wordpress.com/

design, participatory design and incomplete design' to increase that amount of collectivity.[17]

However, I believe situationist spatial practice is only possible via collective action, with unification of conceived, perceived and lived space in a constructed situation. Such spontaneous moments where collectively created space is collectively consumed have the resistant aspect for the contestation of dominant forms of architecture. The task is then as stated by David Harvey:

> *"...to define an alternative, not in terms of some static spatial form or even of some perfected emancipatory process. The task is to pull together a spatiotemporal utopianism - a dialectical utopianism - that is rooted in our present possibilities at the same time as it points towards different trajectories for human uneven geographical developments."[18]*

1.5. Methodology of the Thesis

This thesis seeks an alternative approach to situationist theories and their repercussions on New Babylon in order to attempt to answer the question: What can be the situationist architecture?

For this purpose, it is crucial to comprehend the history of post-war avant-garde with emphasis on SI and internalize situationist critical toolset. Then, the next task is a qualitative analysis of New Babylon to reveal the contradictions which is believed to be originated from its utopic, representative nature. After a thorough comparison of situationist theories and New Babylon as realization of them, series of cases will be discussed according to theoretical background provided before.

The body of this work will be presented in six main parts as follows:

1. **Introduction**

2. **Brief History of Situationist International:** in this chapter, the history post-war artistic avant-garde movements regarding the formation of SI will be

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[17] Maudlin, Daniel and Vellinga, Marcel. Ed. Consuming Architecture: On the Consumption, Appropriation and Interpretation of Buildings (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.4-5.
[18] Harvey, David. Spaces of Hope (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.196.

discussed. This chapter aims to unfold the historical context in which SI developed its theories of architecture and urbanism

3. **Situationist Concepts and Critical Tools:** This chapter will provide a detailed look on situationist theories which introduced in chapter above. Spectacle, constructed situation, dérive, and détournement will be explained considering both their historic origin and their use by situationists. The emphasis will be on détournement for its critical potential.

4. **Representation of Utopia: An Analysis of New Babylon:** Here, the theoretical background provided above will be put into use to criticize New Babylon, or in general utopia. Practice of détournement which is believed to be absent in New Babylon, will be presented as the necessary tool in order to define situationist architecture.

5. **In Search for Situationist Architectures:** SI's view on architecture and the relevant aspects of situationist architecture will be argued. The need for emancipatory spatial practices inspired by situationist principles and how can it be relevant for the transformation of social space will be discussed.

6. **Conclusion**

1.6. Assumption of the Thesis

This work was initiated by an assumption that the discrepancies regarding the foundational principles and representations of New Babylon, will reveal a necessary base for an in depth discussion of a framework for novel architectural experience. These discrepancies are supposed to arise from closed utopianism of New Babylon. In comparison, the methods provided by situationists offer required tools for the creation of heterotopic spatial experiments which contains genuine criticism. These spatial experiments, if properly arranged according to a unitary theory, are presumed to be capable of challenging dominant spatial practices. Thus, the main emphasis of this thesis will be on the comparative analysis of situationist theories and design of New Babylon.

It is presumed that practical and theoretical position of SI represents a unique approach to art and architecture among other postwar avant-garde movements. While SI's supposedly distinguished practical influence over the student movements in the postwar years is worth investigation, essential significance of the SI arises from its exceptional theoretical presence. SI can be considered as the continuation of previous avant-garde movements namely surrealism and Dada. However, SI managed to introduce a differential critique to relation between art and society. According to Peter Buerger, avant-garde fights the conditioning of art as opposing the institutionalized art that is separated from the praxis of life. Art's connections with life praxis must be established instead of destroying art or intervening the content of it. Thus, art will be an integral part of life praxis in an altered form.[19] In the same manner, situationists aspired to establish the connection between art and the praxis of everyday life by the unification of negation and realization of art. Thus, their proposition was the consolidation between surrealist overvaluation of art and simplistic negation of Dada.

Relevance of situationist theories and critical tools for today's architecture and urbanism is assumed to be still sustainable since the conditions and circumstances that gave rise to their conception continues to exist. The form of alienation that is specific to postwar industrial societies endures all the attacks against it. SI's de facto leader Guy Debord's conception of spectacle offers a prophetic estimation of postmodern concept of hyper-reality. He observed the shift of focus in the language of alienation. At the first phase of capitalist development, under the conditions in which social life had been penetrated by forces of production, human beings had been reduced to what they possess, thus being degraded to having. In a society where all the chapters of life is dominated by the accumulation of commodity structures, having must derive its importance and meaning from appearances, thus appearing replaced having.[20]

The ultimate assumption of this thesis is that a comparative assessment of New Babylon and situationist theories and critical tools might offer reconciliation of unyielding conflicts. Theorizing a vague concept of situationist architecture is

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[19] Buerger, Peter. Theory of the Avant-Garde (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp.49.
[20] Debord, Guy-Ernest. Society of the Spectacle (London: Rebel Press, 1983). pp.10-11.

thought to be dependent on such reconciliation. Contradictions between the concepts that will be unfolded in the upcoming chapters should be the internal parts of situationist architectures.

CHAPTER 2

BRIEF HISTORY OF SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

In this part, a brief history of SI along with preceding avant-garde groups such as Revolutionary Surrealist Group, Letterist International, CoBrA, International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus will be given. Intellectual position that SI had taken among others within the shifting political context of the years after Second World War will be explained.

Henri Lefebvre who claimed 'meaning' in life can only be found in everyday life, reality itself, had significant influence on the intellectual presence of post war avant-garde movement. For Lefebvre the link between the real life, what the things are and what they do, and the ideas, what is thought and desired was already evident. The process of criticism could advance in two opposite directions. First direction is the ideas to life, thus achieving *'criticism of ideas by action and realities'*. Marx and Engels had almost always operated their critique in this direction. The other direction, on the other hand, takes reality as starting point and arrives at *'criticism of life by ideas'*.[21] Theories of Lefebvre who regarded everyday life as another ground for struggle against bourgeois society in addition to class struggle which dominated Marx's literature. Therefore, Lefebvre was an important figure both intellectually and personally as they were close friends before he was excommunicated by Debord.

Lefebvre was also closely related with surrealists. Inter-war period French surrealists were filled with the excitement of the freshness of the revolution. The declaration, published in 1925 titled as 'The Revolution First and Always!' which Lefebvre's group Philosophes was among the contributors, had a radically strong internationalist tone and clearly opposed any national sentiment. In the declaration, '*We are certainly*

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[21] Lefebvre, Henri. Critique of Everyday Life Vol.I (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 144-145.

Barbarians, since a certain form of civilization disgusts us' part is especially impressing [22]

After Second World War, in 1947, disgruntled by Breton's departure from revolutionary Marxism, Belgian Christian Dotremont and French Noel Arnaud had founded Revolutionary Surrealist Group. Lefebvre's criticism against surrealism and Breton in 'Critique of Everyday Life' is particularly helpful to understand this conflict. Concept of 'the marvelous' which surrealists used extensively- 'The marvelous is always beautiful, anything marvelous is beautiful, in fact only the marvelous is beautiful' wrote Breton in the first manifesto of surrealism- is mystifying the world and concealing the reality of everyday life.[23] Indeed, the exploration of a hidden meaning trough a vague phenomenon that is 'marvelous,' is arguably revolutionary. However, one can say the same thing on Lefebvre's definition of 'moments' or relatable concept of 'constructed situations'.

After Revolutionary Surrealist Group's French and Belgian wings drew apart, Belgian wing led by Dotremont got involved in the foundation of CoBrA. Hence, Surrealist Group and surrealist movement in general had a strong influence on CoBrA and later SI both individually and intellectually.

2.1. CoBrA

In 1948, group of painters among whom Appel, Corneille and Constant Nieuwenheuys are the most prominent, had started an experimental group against rational essence of western art particularly de stijl. Constant, in the manifesto published in group's journal Reflex, indicates rules to govern a new form of creativity were yet to be formulated whereas old aesthetic values of bourgeoisie art had come to an end. He claims that western art being once the promoter of aristocracy and clergy, has put its power at newly powerful bourgeoisie's disposal. It was artists'

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[22] Richardson, Michael and Fijalkowski, Krzysztof. Ed. Trans. Surrealism Against the Current: Tracts and Declarations (London: Pluto Press, 2001), pp. 95-96.
[23] Lefebvre, Henri. Op.Cit. pp. 110.

responsibility to destroy aesthetic values of old art and experiment with new methods of expression which comes from life itself.[24]

In the manifesto, the part where Constant criticize the static relationship between artist and onlooker –claiming that the more defined is the form the more passive is the onlooker is particularly interesting. He proposes a more dynamic relationship in which the onlooker's creative ability could flourish. This may assist to associate uncompromising contradictions between art and life, artist and onlooker.[25] In fact, in this manifesto, bits and pieces of ideas which are going to constitute the core of New Babylon is clearly written.

In November 1948, Dutch experimental group was joined by Belgian wing of revolutionary surrealists and Danish painter Asger Jorn to create CoBrA which took its name from the abbreviations of its founders' base cities, Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam. Members of CoBrA published a journal with the same name until its dissolution in 1951.

CoBrA from the start, distanced itself from André Breton and surrealists as the latter implied the dominance of thought liberated from surveillance of reason, all aesthetic or moral concerns.[26] Whereas artists of CoBrA, while also advocating disposal of reason, aesthetic and moral values, fundamentally differed in that they regarded art as instinctual. According to Asger Jorn art was primitive in origin, thus as material as possible. Materialists had to put art back to its original place, on a basis of senses. It was "the metaphysical aspects of classicism which have managed to spiritualize and tellectualize art".[27] Therefore, the art had to appeal to the senses, had to find an expression of forms truthful to their content. These forms would have nuances in themselves such that there could be found things common to all individuals, thus transcend the boundaries of individual subjectivity. In this way, when it is read together with Constant's criticism of relationship between artist and subject, this can

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[24] Nieuwenheuys, Constant. Manifesto in Reflex#1 (1948). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Richardson, Michael and Fijalkowski, Krzysztof. Ed. Trans. Surrealism Against the Current: Tracts and Declarations (London: Pluto Press, 2001), pp. 203.
[27] Jorn, Asger. Forms Conceived as Language in Cobra#2 (1949). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

be read as a hint of collective artistic production. The red flag, Jorn gives for instance, is a perfect expression of revolution. It is not an allegory or a direct representation of revolution, but somehow it stimulates the part of reality which is common in all.[28]

CoBrA, especially Jorn, aimed to feed from other sources than dominant western art, looked on the East and Northern European Art. Trying to achieve forms outside the realm of reason, they examined the production of primitives, children and mental patients. Material art must have been 'Dionysian' rather than 'Apollonian' which means it must have been related to movement, momentary, festival, spontaneity in nature.[29] Constant was more straightforward in his line of thought in comparison to Jorn. He simply agreed on surrealist attack on constructivism but regarded it too much intellectualized and disconnected from life itself.[30]

The group organized its first exhibition in Brussels in 1949. After that, a series of exhibitions among which the most influential was the one in the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum, followed. The group suffered political and personal disagreements that finally cause their break up in 1951. CoBrA 'both succeeded triumphantly and failed miserably', according to Peter Wollen. Their immediate objective for replacing dominant artistic vision has failed in that Parisian art establishment was incredibly strong. However, their historic success became visible only after Paris has been contested as the center of global art.[31]

2.2. International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus

Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus had been founded by the people gathered around Asger Jorn in 1954. During his visits to Italy after his treatment in a Swiss sanatorium, Jorn met Italian artists, firstly nuclear painting movement Enrico Baj. In this new initiative, Jorn combined his old friends from CoBrA with new friends from Italy.

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[28] Jorn, Asger. Forms Conceived as Language in Cobra#2 (1949). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.
[29] Wollen, Peter. 'The Situationist International' in New Left Review (I/174, March-April 1989), pp.83-84.
[30] Ibid, pp.84-85.
[31] Ibid, pp.85-86.

The idea of an Imaginist Bauhaus formed when Swiss artist Max Bill who had given the job to establish a new 'Hochschule für Gestaltung' in Ulm, reached Jorn. The school was planned as an updated Bauhaus. Jorn was initially excited about the project, but soon realized that it was meant to be an updated version of the old productivist model.

According to Jorn, original Bauhaus was founded in 1919 as an answer to the question: '*What "education" do artists need in order to take their place in the machine age?*' Imaginst Bauhaus would answer where and how artists find a rightful place in the machine age.[32] Old Bauhaus was an attempt to unify arts and crafts, abolish the difference between artist and craftsman. Although it proposed a radical educational model where teacher was the 'formmeister' and student was the apprentice, and was revolutionary for its time, it was no longer promising any novelty any more in post war context. Emphasizing technology and functionalism over aesthetic may only lead to alienation, standardization and ordering of society. Pedagogical must have been replaced by experimental; master-apprentice relationship must have been replaced by a laboratory carried out by co-workers. Thus, in 1955, Jorn and Italian artist Pinot Galizzio who was a partisan during the war have started a prototype for Imaginist Bauhaus laboratory in Galizzio's hometown Alba.[33]

In Alba, Jorn, Galizzio and others experimented with new techniques of painting, ceramics and tapestry for a while. Next year, they organized a conference titled the 'First World Congress of Free Artists' which laid foundation to SI. Among meeting's attendants, there were Constant and Gil Wolman who was a member of Lettrist International. The two groups found themselves in similar positions in subjects like art and politics. In search for a different course outside the dominance of Stalinist and Trotskyist political entities and their artistic extensions namely social realism and orthodox surrealism, they decided on common action. Thus, the scene was ready for SI.

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[32] Jorn, Asger, 'Notes on the Formation of the Imaginist Bauhaus' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.16-17.
[33] Wollen, Peter. 'The Situationist International' in New Left Review (I/174, March-April 1989), pp.88.

2.3. Lettrism-Lettrist International

Lettrism was invented by Romanian-born French artist Isidore Isou who proclaimed himself a messiah. Isou believed history was driven forward by power of creation. Human creativity was making the world exist and it was the only meaningful action. Human, through act of creation, had to become a god. Thus, one of the most enduring myths of modernity, autogenesis or self-mastery was radicalized by Isou and Lettrism.[34]

Isou theorized a system for history of arts. For him, each art discipline was evolving in two phases in order. First, there was the 'phase amplique' where the form developed to perfection and created the language capable of expression beyond its implicit content. Then, in the 'phase ciselant' the forms and technique became the focus. In literature for instance, it was Victor Hugo who completed 'phase amplique' and Baudelaire was the one started 'phase ciselant'. Finally surrealists and dada destroyed narrative completely to the point it ceased to mean anything.[35] Isou aimed to continue to destruction of language by tearing apart words into letters, creating a new alphabet consisting of new letters. Thus, his lettrist experiments were supposed to introduce a new 'phase amplique'[36]

By the help of staged scandals, Isou had gained recognition during 40's and 50's. Gathered around him, a small group young people applied the theories on different mediums. The focus of production shifted to visual field from early works of literature. During the years just before Lettrist International declared independence from Isou, group's production peaked with a series of revolutionary cinematic works. Isou's film 'Traité de bave et d'éternité' (The Drivel and Eternity Treatise) won Avant-Garde Award at Cannes film festival in 1951. In the film, the visuals and the soundtrack were unrelated and former was composed of boring images like still photographs. Film strip was purposefully scratched and different symbols were drawn

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[34] Rasmussen, Mikkel Bolt. 'The Situationist International, Surrealism, and the Difficult Fusion of Art and Politics' in Oxford Art Journal (Vol. 27, No. 3, 2004), pp.369.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Home, Stewart. The Assault on Culture: Utopian currents from Lettrisme to Class War (Stirling: A.K. Press,1991), pp.13.

on it. After that, they carried out experiments including integrating spectators' voices into soundtrack, presenting film's debate as film itself, culminating in Guy Debord's film 'Hurlements en faveur de Sade' (Howling in Favor of De Sade) which does not contain any image at all. Blackened film strip with occasional white flashes and silence combined with seldom random dialogue declared the death of the cinema.[37]

On 29 October 1952, a scandal finalized the split of young members who were already drifting away. During the last press conference of Charlie Chaplin who recently returned from US in Paris, four young men suddenly started shouting and throwing flyers around. The text in the flyer was titled as 'No More Flat Feet' and signed by Serge Berna, Guy-Ernest Debord, Jean-L. Brau, and Gil Wolman on behalf of Lettrist International. It was a text full of insults accusing Chaplin for being a collaborationist in disguise of a revolutionary.[38] The assault on Chaplin who was both a popular film star and a favorite of radical groups like surrealists has got praised by almost no one. Isou and other lettrists also declared their disapproval of the groups action against Chaplin in a letter published in *Combat*. The protest against Chaplin, despite its provocative language, was not aimed to knock down his work entirely since they admitted its significance for its own time. Tough, they believed that *'the most urgent expression of freedom is the destruction of idols, especially when they claim to represent freedom'.*[39]

LI continued its aggressive attitude towards anyone with even minor disagreements. In the second issue of their journal, *Potlatch*, they published a list of 'old guard' whom they seek to defeat. The list included Isou as well as Brau and Berna who were part of the action against Chaplin and Ivan Chtcheglov who was later going to be part of SI. Although members changed frequently, Guy Debord, Michele Bernstein, Gil

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[37] Ibid, pp.14.
[38] Rasmussen, Mikkel Bolt. 'The Situationist International, Surrealism, and the Difficult Fusion of Art and Politics' in Oxford Art Journal (Vol. 27, No. 3, 2004), pp.368.
[39] Berna, Serge and Brau, Jean-Louis, Debord, Guy-Ernest & Wolman, Gil J. 'No More Flat Feet' in Rosenberg, Sophie. Trans. Internationale Lettriste #1 (November, 1952). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

Wolman, Mohamed Dahou, Andre-Frank Conord and Jacques Filion composed the core of LI.

Abandoning literary studies that constitutes the main focus of Lettrist movement, architecture and urbanism had become more central issues for LI. Chtcheglov who used pseudonym Gilles Ivain reflected LI's conception of architecture and urbanism. He evaluated condition of urban environment as '*swept by banalization*'. According to him, systems of production and utilities have surpassed the initial objective of liberating humanity from material needs and become an omnipresent obsessive image.[40] To overcome this overwhelming image, life must have been modified and architecture is the primary means of modifying life.

Chtcheglov's writing was the first criticism of modern urbanism by LI and earliest attempt to formulize a new architecture and urbanism. Clues of which was later going to be called 'unitary urbanism' can be found in the text. Also, the concepts that generate New Babylon's design guideline –if there is such thing- lies in the text. For Chtcheglov, architectural complex of the future must have been modifiable according to its inhabitants' desires. Thus, 'everyone will live in their own personal "cathedral."' The districts of the future city will have reflected diverse emotional setting that one attains arbitrarily in everyday life. Happy Quarter, Bizarre Quarter, Noble and Tragic Quarter, Historical Quarter, Useful Quarter etc. would have been the districts to discover while the citizens are occupied with their main activity: drifting continuously.

With reference to Chtcheglov's 'Formulary for a New Urbanism', Debord coined the term psychogeography for the investigation of city through drifting. He defined psychogeography as the exploration of the accurate rules and effects that geographical environment has on individuals' emotions and behavior. Debord came with a vaguer definition for the adjective form, psychogeographical. It may indicate the findings of this type exploratory work or its impression on individual, or in a

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[40] Chtcheglov, Ivan. 'Formulary for a New Urbanism' in in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.2. The text originally appeared in Internationale Situationniste #1 (October, 1953).

wider sense any form of study that bears the similar vein of exploration.[41] Indeed, he enjoyed vagueness of the term in a sarcastic poem-like text titled as 'Exercise in Psychogeography', published in the second issue of Potlatch, where Piranesi is claimed to be psychogeographical in the stairway and Jack the Ripper probably psychogeographical in love.[42]

Architectural and urban concepts appeared in Potlatch since the publication of its first issue. In 'Psychogeographical Game of the Week', readers were recommended to choose an area, preferably a busy street of a crowded city, build a house, decorate it, arrange a meeting with the best of people, music and drinks, and inform the editors of the results.[43] Furthermore, LI offered a number of improvements for the city of Paris in the 23rd issue of Potlatch. These included subway stations that remain open even when the trains not working, opening up rooftops to pedestrian traffic through modified fire-escape ladders and bridges, making street lights adjustable as well as eliminating religious buildings and cemeteries. In fact, there were opposing views on how religious buildings should be treated. Debord supported the total destruction of the churches while Wolman advocated to strip them from their current function. Children could play in them, for example. Bernstein proposed to partially tear down so that remaining ruins would give no hint of original function. Lastly Fillon suggested to convert them into 'houses of horror'. Prisons and museums were also in the agenda. Prisons could be touristic places where inmates and visitors treated equally. Museums should have been abolished and works of art should have been exhibited at bars and cafes.[44]

LI also found numerous occasions to cast its theories of psychogeography into experiments. Debord mentions of a friend, for instance, who wandered around Harz

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[41] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.5. The text originally appeared in Les Lèvres Nues #6 (September, 1955).

[42] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Exercise in Psychogeography' in Potlatch #2 (June, 1954). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

[43] 'Psychogeographical Game of the Week' in Potlatch #1 (June 1954). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

[44] Lettrist International. "Proposals for Rationally Improving the City of Paris" in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006). The text originally appeared in Potlatch #23 (October, 1955).

region of Germany while blindly following directions from map of London.[45] However, as Stewart Home indicated, these experiments were far from providing clear data on which Debord claimed to build scientific research of psychogeography. Psychogeographical games diversified with meeting with random strangers, walking without rest and destination, and walking the catacombs of Paris while they are closed to public entrance. Despite being humorous attempts, it was not possible to get serious results from them. Urban theories of LI as well has never gone beyond Chtcheglov's formulary. The idea of using mobile structures for a nomadic life was already apparent.

2.4. Formation of Situationist International

As mentioned before, SI was, at least at the beginning, an amalgamation of LI and International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus. In September 1956, Italian town Alba housed 'First World Congress of Free Artists' which gathered together these groups. Constant was also among the participants. Wolman who represented LI at the conference gave a speech that proposes a unified movement for struggle against fragmentary artistic practices of bourgeois society. Creation could only be possible in the form of synthesis determined for construction of entire atmospheres and styles of life.[46]

The congress resolved with agreement on principles which laid the way for SI's formation. "necessity of an integral construction of the environment by a unitary urbanism that must utilize all arts and modern techniques"; "inevitable outmodedness of any renovation of an art within its traditional limits"; and "recognition of an essential interdependence between unitary urbanism and a future style of life" were declared to be possible "in the perspective of a greater real freedom and a greater

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[45] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.5. The text originally appeared in Les Lèvres Nues #6 (September, 1955).
[46] 'The Alba Platform' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.14-15. The text originally appeared in Potlatch #27 (November, 1956).

domination of nature". Final point of declaration ensured unity of action among the signers of this program.[47]

'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action' which was penned by Debord in 1957 marked the beginning of SI. Report or manifesto accepted at a conference at another Italian town Cosio d'Arrossica. Beginning from the frist sentence, manifesto declared the purpose of SI: *'First of all, we think the world must be changed. We want the most liberating change of the society and life in which we find ourselves confined. We know that such a change is possible through appropriate actions.*[48]

According to Debord, bourgeoisie has the peculiar ability to exploit the abstract principle of intellectual and artistic creation after first resisting the new concepts. For this, by means of commercial structures, connections of revolutionary thought and the fractions of society which could attach to them are interrupted. Thus, avant-garde as suggested by its name remains limited to a few individuals who could accept the renunciations.[49] Hence, a collective avant-garde with a consistent revolutionary program that incorporates entirety of culture was necessary.

Debord, being aware of the fault of precursor movements, started with the criticism of pre-war avant-garde. Futurism was accused of its naïve approach to technical progress and inability to develop a wider theoretical perspective, thus falling into the hands of fascism. Dadaism's failure was based on its pure negativity. After it fulfilled its purpose that is dealing a fatal blow to the traditional conceptions of culture, immediately dissolved. However, dada remained to sustain its influence over all the movements that come after that.[50]

Surrealism brought innovation when Freudian psychology has been put into practice in poetry and elaborated in other forms of art. Nonetheless, its overly enthusiastic

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[47] Ibid., pp.15.
[48] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.17.
[49] Ibid., pp.18.
[50] Ibid.

confidence on the limitless potential of unconscious caused its failure. For Debord, unconscious alone was poor, automatic writing was monotonous and what supposed to be marvelous and shocking had long ceased to appall anyone. This form of unconscious imagination at the opposing side of modern condition was a mere reconstruction of occultism. Besides, radical and disturbing aspect of surrealism with awareness of its danger has been swiftly reduced to aesthetic values and accepted by bourgeoisie. Every subsequent movement was to be labeled as reiteration of surrealism, thus bearing the burden of its defeat. It was essential to look forward and further rationalize the world without falling into a reactionary position of idealizing irrationality of primitive societies.[51]

Aestheticization was the most dangerous threat to any avant-garde movement. That's way, denouncement of surrealism found a significant place in Debord's manifesto. Lettrism had initiated a complete negation of all known aesthetic forms. However, it admittedly intended to establish itself on a similar overall scheme of former aesthetic discipline.[52] Minority movements like LI, had the opportunity to evade bourgeoisie's appropriation and domestication. Nonetheless, they were easily ignored and isolated.

Debord gives the framework for a collective avant-garde movement which would embrace modern culture as source of detouring practice without falling into the simplistic refusal of it. First of all, there should have been total accordance among participants. The discordant must have been renounced. Secondly, while novel experimental approach was applicable, any attempt to justify conventional artistic procedures with notion of experiment should have been avoided. Artistic project should have surpassed the limits of existing structures. Finally, SI must not have fallen into the sectarian way which LI Had pursued immediately after its foundation. Expulsions, though keeping the group's purity, after a while immobilized certain critical aspects.[53]

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[51] Ibid., pp.19-20.
[52] Debord, Guy-Ernest. Op.Cit., pp.20-21.
[53] Ibid., pp.22.

Although these principles suggest that SI was found on the self-criticism and would not follow the exclusionist methods of LI, banishments based on minor reasons has not stop. For example, Constant was expelled for his associates who built a church. In any case, SI was already built upon two different groups: artists and full time revolutionaries. Eventually, the role and enthusiasm of artist for the SI gradually decreased. Conflicting ideas of artists and Lettrist group –or political theoreticians or revolutionaries were culminated to an irreconcilable point at the fifth conference of SI in 1962. Therefore, as Peter Wollen indicated, history of SI in two consequent phases demarcated by splitting of group in1962: art-oriented and politics-oriented.[54]

As stated by Home, SI has brought little novelty to urbanism after LI. Indeed, SI period can be narrated around Debord's struggle with politics aside from a few artistic projects. These artistic project mostly happened during 1959. Then, in 1960, Galizzio and Constant was expelled and a year after Jorn resigned, although remaining as a supporter. Finally, in 1962, artists completely disconnected from French wing of the movement with elimination of Jorn's brother Jorgen Nash and German SPUR group.

During this purge period, Debord forged close ties with French *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (Socialism or Barbarism) group which was then part of Communist Party. SB represented council communism which advocated direct administration of factories by workers' councils.

Debord with one of SB leading figures, Pierre Canjeurs who used the nickname Daniel Blanchard, wrote a declaration titled 'Preliminaries Toward Defining a Unitary Revolutionary Program' in 1960. For them, work in the capitalist societies was organized in three segments: the workshop, the office and the directorate. These parcels of production were separated from each other to be only connected through clandestine or partial transgression of people.[55] Outside of work, the spectacle dominated every aspect of life only allowing a falsified knowledge of real social

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[54] Wollen, Peter. 'Bitter Victory: Art and Politics of Situationist International' in Sussman, Elizabeth. Ed. 'On the Passage of a Few People Through a rather brief moment in Time: The Situationist International 1957-1972' (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), pp.25.
[55] Canjeurs, Pierre and Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Preliminaries Toward Defining a Unitary Revolutionary Program' (July 1960). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

relations. Genuine desires are replaced by mere compensations.[56] Spectacle which will be explained later is the ultimate form of Marx's concept of alienation and constitutes the central notion of Debord's masterwork 'Society of the Spectacle'.The revolutionary movement was only possible through the transformation of every aspects of life beginning with the emancipation of production. Once the workers acquired management of production directly, the separations of work and leisure, production and consumption would dissolve into a unitary vital experience.[57] Thus, the key to total transformation of society was the autonomous workers' councils. Debord's relationship with SB lasted short. It seems that Debord could tolerate neither SB's more orthodox line which placed the production as the central struggle nor the artistic groups in the SI that he thought to regard proletariat as passionless consumers.

CoBrA-Imaginist Bauhaus line had also owned their own struggles with politics. Shortly after the war, under the overwhelming pressure of Stalinism, CoBrA found itself within the conflict between communists and anti-communists. Dotremont reacted distancing himself from politics. However, Jorn and Constant wanted to establish a direct connection between art and politics, although they pursued different paths. Constant departed from painting in favor of experimental urbanism and city planning which he sought as a collective and public in a way that traditional painting could never be. Whereas, Jorn continued to improve CoBrA's painting conception in purer forms.[58]

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Wollen, Peter. 'Bitter Victory: Art and Politics of Situationist International' in Sussman, Elizabeth. Ed. 'On the Passage of a Few People Through a rather brief moment in Time: The Situationist International 1957-1972' (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), pp.44.
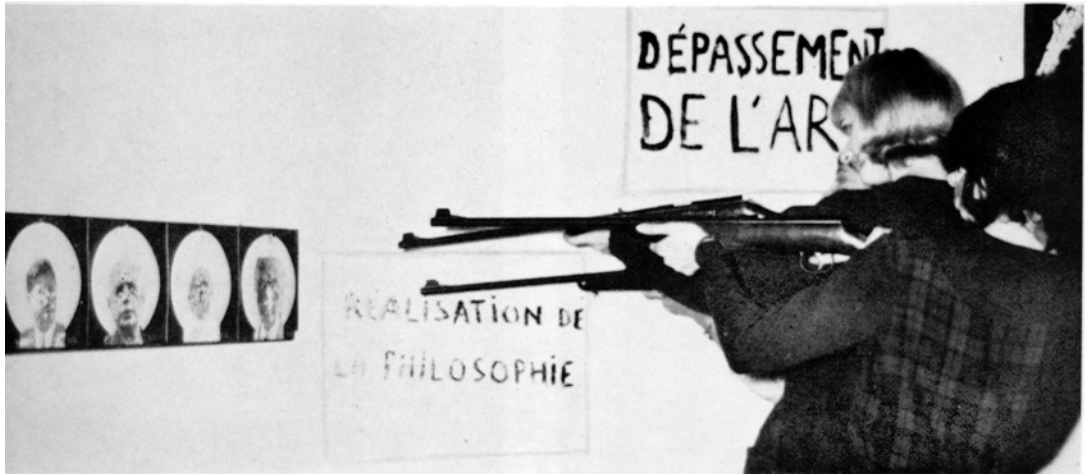
Figure 1: visitors shooting rifles at political leaders, Destruction of RSG-6

After 1962, with exclusion of prominent figureheads, an increasingly pivotal role was taken by Debord. Artistic projects stopped with the exception of an exhibition took place in Odense, Denmark: *"Destruktion af RSG-6"* (Destruction of RSG-6). The exhibition was made up of three parts. First part was decorated like a bomb shelter. In the second part, visitors were expected to shoot rifles at photographs of world leaders like Kennedy, Khrushchev, De Gaulle and the Pope. There were also handwritten slogans like *"Réalisations de la philosophie"* (Realization of Philosophy) and *"Abolition du travail aliéné"* (Abolition of Alienated Labour) on the wall. The third part consisted of two series of works: *"Termonukleare kartografier"* (Thermonuclear Maps) by J.V. Martin and *"Victoires du prolétariat"* (Victories of the Proletariat) by Michèle Bernstein. The exhibition was a reaction against shelters called 'Regional Seats of Government' which were built by British Government secretly to house local politicians and state officials in case of nuclear war.[59]

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[59] Rasmussen, Mikkel Bolt. 'To Act in Culture While Being Against All Culture: The Situationists and the "Destruction of RSG-6"' in Rasmussen, Mikkel Bolt and Jakobsen, Jakob ed. Expect Anything Fear Nothing: The Situationist Movement in Scandinavia and Elsewhere (Brooklyn, NY.: Nebula in association with Autonomedia, 2011), pp.75-76.

The exhibition was realized in the height of cold war just five months after Cuba missile crisis. Spies for Peace group had managed to break in one of the Regional Seats of Government in Reading. Great amount of fear had been being spread by the governments to strengthen their authority.

> The situationist movement can be seen as an artistic avant-garde, as an experimental investigation of possible ways for freely constructing everyday life, and as a contribution to the theoretical and practical development of a new revolutionary contestation. From now on, any fundamental cultural creation, as well as any qualitative transformation of society, is contingent on the continued development of this sort of interrelated approach.[60]

Thus, Destruction of RSG-6 exhibition was supposedly compatible with SI's vision of revolutionary art. It is comparable with an exhibition organized previous year by former SI members led by Nash. With "Seven Rebels" exhibition, Nash and six other artists attempted to bring art into everyday life. The visitors were provided paint, papers, wood etc. and expected to turn the exhibition space into a huge collage.[61]

Although Lefebvre rightfully claims that situationists exaggerated their part in May '68, influence of situationist ideas on Paris student community cannot be neglected.[62] The '68 movement was initiated by a small group called *"les enragés"* at Nanterre and quickly developed into an all-out protest. Situtationists' impact was most visible in posters and graffiti. 'Slogans to be Spread Now by Every Means' which were determined by 'Occupation Committee of the Autonomous and Popular Sorbonne University' also bears the situationist impression.[63] May '68 can also be seen as the victory of council communism, since students and workers had established autonomous councils and proclaimed the control of their respective spaces. After the defeat of '68, SI began to dissolve to finally end in 1972. Debord continued his theoretical work and produced several films until he shot himself to death in 1994.

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[60] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'The Situationists and the New Forms of Action in Art and Politics' from the brochure of 'Destruction of RSG-6' (June, 1963). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.
[61] Rasmussen, Mikkel Bolt. Op.Cit., pp.93.
[62] Ross, Kristin. Interview with Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview. October (Vol. 79, Winter, 1997), pp.81.
[63] 'Slogans to be Spread Now by Every Means' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.344.

2.5. Legacy of SI

May '68 is often described as "bitter victory" for SI. There might be two reasons for this. First, disintegration of SI which was already separated from Danish and German chapters as well as individual artists like Constant and Galizzio and reduced to a sectarian group in Paris, has started. Second and more important reason is that the situationist influence on '68 movement was cultural rather than political.[64]

Indeed, situationist legacy relies on the concepts that formulated in the early years of SI or even before the foundation of SI. However, the struggle to create a unitary revolutionary movement in a unique position had isolated SI into a narrow political frame. Dada had devised negation of art as the way of combat against bourgeois society while surrealism elevated art to unattainable position. SI wanted to ambitiously unite art and politics, but instead art became the propaganda device for politics.

The fear of becoming absorbed in the spectacle dominated the so called "political period" of the SI. It was not an irrelevant fear regarding the ability of bourgeoisie to domesticate dangerous notions. For instance, situations in Denmark was among the leading who founded a commune in Copenhagen. Christiania commune, although having troubles with local authorities in the past, is now part of touristic itineraries. For a more recent example, street art becomes increasingly more tolerable even though it started illegal –and to a large extent it still is. Even dada which aimed at complete negation of bourgeoisie art is now placed in museums. In short, efforts to negate bourgeois culture or criticize it have ended up among the "immense accumulation of spectacles" which presented life.[65]

Despite Debord's efforts to transform it to a full-fledged platform for the revolution, SI is mostly remembered for their theories of situations, dérive and détournement.

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[64] Wollen, Peter. 'Bitter Victory: Art and Politics of Situationist International' in Sussman, Elizabeth. Ed. 'On the Passage of a Few People Through a rather brief moment in Time: The Situationist International 1957-1972' (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), pp.27.
[65] Debord, Guy-Ernest. Society of the Spectacle (London: Rebel Press, 1983), pp.7.

Thus, SI took its place among the historic avant-garde which had its momentary junctions with political movements of their time.[66]

CHAPTER 3

SITUATIONIST CONCEPTS AND CRITICAL TOOLS

3.1. Spectacle

For the SI, spectacle is the principal notion that governs relations among people. It might be interpreted as the extension of Marx's concepts of alienation and commodity fetishism, re-adjusted for the post-war consumer society.

The worker in the capitalist mode of production, is reduced to a mere commodity. As the proportion of the production grows, the worker becomes even poorer. There is an intense contradiction between size of the worker's creation and the value of labor as commodity. In other words, *"the devaluation of the world of men is in direct proportion to the increasing value of the world of things"*. Labor while producing commodities, at the same time produces itself as the commodity.[67]

The object of the worker's production is the realization of the worker's labor. In other words, *"the product of labor is labor which has been embodied in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labor"*. The commodity which is the realization of labor, appears as the loss of realization for the worker.[68] Thus, the labor and the product of labor are two separate things while being essentially the same thing (one is other's objectification).

The worker becomes alienated not only to the product of labor but also the production activity itself. Therefore, the worker cannot associate with the labor which is external to oneself. As the magnitude and complexity of the production and commodity increase, the connection of the labor to its production decreases. Division of labor

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[67] Marx, Karl. Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974). pp.63.
[68] Ibid.

that required by mass production, partitions labor into segments which are unaware of each other.

As soon as the products of labor assume the commodity form, they lose all the connection with their physical properties and material relations which generate them. The social relationship between individuals manifest itself in the form of the relationship between commodities. Therefore, commodities emanate as independent objects in relation with each other and individuals. Thus, a mystifying aspect that Marx calls fetishism is tied to products of labor, once they are produced as commodities for exchange.[69] Individual labor as part of the total social labor can only manifest itself through the relations between commodities since individual labor does not come into touch with social relations until the exchange activity occurs.[70] Hence, as Marx stated: *"It is only by being exchanged that the products of labor acquire a socially uniform objectivity as values, which is distinct from their sensuously varied objectivity as articles of utility"*.[71] This objectivity, represented by the money form as ultimate determinant of exchange value, has the power to conceal the social aspect of individual labor and rendering the relations between them as the relations between commodities.[72]

Debord, when developing the theory of spectacle, was greatly influenced by György Lukács' concept of reification. Lukács placed the proletariat as the subject of history and, by combining commodity fetish and Hegelian concept of objectification, derived his theory of reification.[73] For Lukács, relations between individuals take the character of things and this 'phantom objectivity' conceals the true character of human subjectivity.[74] Debord then adapted reification of labor to the postwar Keynesian capitalism. While Lukács, writing in the age of Fordist mass production, had witnessed the reifying effect of standardization and mass production, Debord

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[69] Marx, Karl. Capital, Vol.1 (London: Penguin Books, 1976). pp.165.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., pp.166.
[72] Ibid., pp.168.
[73] Wollen, Peter. 'Bitter Victory: Art and Politics of Situationist International' in Sussman, Elizabeth. Ed. 'On the Passage of a Few People Through a rather brief moment in Time: The Situationist International 1957-1972' (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), pp.31.
[74] Lukács, György. History and Class Consiousness (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1971). pp.83.

wrote in a context within which postwar capitalist market boomed with immeasurable variety of commodities accompanied by all-pervading advertisement.[75]

Therefore, Debord centered upon the tremendous image production perpetuated by bourgeois society. For him, in modern capitalist societies, every genuine experience is ceased to a mere representation and life itself is replaced by the 'immense accumulation of spectacles' with reference to Marx's 'immense accumulation of commodities'. The spectacle is not the accumulation of images, it is the overarching system of social relation mediated by images, presenting itself as part of the society and at the same time outside of society as the element of unification despite its concealed separative effect. The life, in fact, is crumbled up into so many fragments that are unified –or seem unified in a false world of spectacles.[76] The spectacle is passively accepted and consumed and its only message is: "what appears is good; what is good appears".[77]

There are some parallels between the concept of spectacle and the concept of culture industry brought by Frankfurt School. Just as the spectacle causes the deception and inertia among the masses, culture industry with its mass produced banality, ensures the masses embrace the dominance of capital.[78] However, spectacle is, in a Lukácsian sense, the totalizing, all-encompassing structure which autonomously deceives even the deceivers, while culture industry is sort of a filter which commodifies every piece of cultural production. It operates on profit just like other industries as part of the capitalism while spectacle is the form of alienation itself, the reifying power of the exchange value.

Another fundamental difference of Debord and Frankfurt School is their perspective on the role of art. For Adorno, there is a certain critical function of art. Its criticality is only possible without the disturbance of any political agenda. In other words, art is only critical when it has the formal autonomy. Form here does not refer to its

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[75] Wollen. Op.cit.
[76] Debord, Guy-Ernest. Society of the Spectacle (London: Rebel Press, 1983). pp.7.
[77] Ibid., pp.9-10.
[78] Adorno, Theodor and Horkheimer, Max. Dialectic of Enlightenment (New York, NY.: The Continuum Publishing Company 1989). pp.120.

technique or style, rather it is the entirety of the artwork's organization.[79] The artwork that defies the standardization of culture industry have the emancipatory power that unveils the dissonance of modern society. Whereas, Debord and situationists have a much more destructive opinion toward art. Debord criticized dada for abolishing art without realizing it and surrealists for realizing art without abolishing it. For situationists, art must be the unification of realizing and abolishing in a single transcendence of art.[80] Art is part of the passively consumed spectacle since it is also passively spectated and fetishized. Once art is weaponized as a tool for transformation of society and driven to its limits, it may acquire a unique position different from art. To conclude, spectacle is the current form of alienation specific to postindustrial societies. It appears as the only reality that brings the shattered fragments of reality together. Its root is the enslavement of use value by the exchange value. And to abolish it is only possible by discovering the situations that everyday life offers. Debord gives the example of 1965 Los Angeles riots where black people rise to demand what spectacle offers, the abundance of commodities, by looting. "*Through theft and gift they rediscover a use that immediately refutes the oppressive rationality of the commodity, revealing its relations and even its production to be arbitrary and unnecessary*".[81] Absurdity is inevitably apparent when people with no access to electricity stole large refrigerators, since it reveals the mere truth behind the fetishistic character of commodities when their exchange value is at stake.[82] Debord claims that a local insurrection opposing spectacle stands as a threat at the level of totality since the estrangement of individual from the social reality of human nature begins at the level of individual.[83] Therefore, it is possible to challenge the totality of spectacle even in an individual scale.

3.2. Constructed Situation

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[79] Held, David, Introduction to Critical Theory Horkheimer to Habermas, University of California Press 1980, p83
[80] Debord, Guy-Ernest. Society of the Spectacle (London: Rebel Press, 1983). pp.106.
[81] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'The Decline and Fall of Spectacle-Commodity Economy' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.155. The text originally appeared in SI#10 (December, 1965).
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., pp.160.

Constructed situation is one of the methods situationists used for interruption of the spectacle. In the first issue of the SI, it is defined as "a moment of life concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambiance and game of events". [84] Situations are deliberately constructed moments in everyday life, sections of revolutionary play staged by agents that must be called 'livers' instead of actors or players since it is thought to be the actual lived experience rather than the spectacle-commodity world. [85]

SI gives a rough frame for organization of these situations. First of all, it is not limited to creation of an ambiance via collection of artistic methods regardless of its spatiotemporal extent. It is rather a unification of individual behaviors in time as participants of these ventures have to bring their own cravings for ambiances in this sort of "situationist-oriented psychoanalysis". [86] The constructed situation must be the culmination of collective effort in its design and delivery. However, certain temporal hierarchy that does not rely on specializations might be necessary as one of the agents claims the role of "director" for coordination. [87]

The theory of situations is very much related with Henri Lefebvre's critique of everyday life and theory of moments. Moments are profoundly lived experiences emerge from and within everyday life while providing a negation to triviality of everyday life. Yet, the moment is not precisely the same thing as the situation. Lefebvre claims that the difference between moment and situation is somewhat similar to that of between 'structure' and 'conjuncture'. When faced with the external conjuncture, individual takes a decision with an orientation towards a moment which require an articulation in time and space thus creating a situation. [88] In comparison to

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[84] 'Definitions' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.45. The text originally appeared in SI#1 (1958).
[85] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.25.
[86] 'Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.43.
[87] Ibid., pp.44.
[88] Lefebvre, Henri. Critique of Everyday Life Vol.II (London: Verso, 2002), pp.352.

moment, situation is unique and unrepeatable. Its essential difference to moment lies in its intentionality and spatio-temporal character.

Since constructed situation is a cut of everyday life that altered and performed according to some set of rules, it may also be associated with elements of play. Indeed, Dutch historian Johan Huizinga's ideas about the role of play in culture were particularly important for SI. Huizinga advocated that play has the prominent role in developing culture as it is even older than culture itself. Play is not specific to human; it is a characteristic we share with animals. Play is specifically free activity (when it is done involuntarily, it is not play anymore, by definition) that requires leaving the 'ordinary' the 'real' for a moment and stepping into a sphere of autonomous order.[89] He also claims that culture, at the beginning, imitated the forms of play as even the simple fulfillment of basic needs contained traces of play form. However, as the culture proceeded, play elements were drawn into background and completely disguised under cultural phenomena.[90]

As the outer reality is now masked by the spectacle, it is necessary to penetrate it by creation of playful activity since it refers to an elementary form of reality that precedes culture. Here, we may also recall Asger Jorn's suggestion to discover forms that awaken senses common to all.[91] Since the play is an attribute of our species, it is certainly common among all.

Guy Debord and situationists saw Huizinga's theories as a source for their theories of situations despite its idealist attitude. The sphere of free activity of play in contrast to obligatory relations of reality, is seen as the sole setting for revolutionary action. They, then, sought for the occasions that allows the suitable conditions for its expansion. However, the rules of game which is arbitrary, must have been replaced by a new set of rules that rely on a moral foundation.[92]

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[89] Huizinga, Johan. Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1964). pp.1-27.
[90] Ibid., pp.46-47.
[91] Jorn, Asger. Forms Conceived as Language in Cobra#2 (1949). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.
[92] 'Architecture and Play' in Potlatch #20 (May 1955). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

For a conclusion, we might assume that situationist concept of constructed situation is the combination of elements of Lefebvre's theory of moments and Huizinga's analysis of play and we can add the surrealist concept of 'project' into this mixture. For SI, fall of the spectacle-commodity society is impossible without the transformation of everyday life. The opposite is also true as the transformation of the totality of everyday life is not possible without bringing the spectacle down. Thus, SI developed situations as weaponized spatio-temporal playful activities in individual scale for the downfall of the spectacle.

3.3. Dérive

Dérive, which means drifting in French, is a situationist critical method for a distinctive experience of urban space. It can be defined as "a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances".[93] Its origins can be found in Baudelaire's poems and Edgar Alan Poe's short story 'The Man of the Crowd'. However, it was Walter Benjamin who conceptualize 'flâneur' as a strolling figure of modern life. In his monumental and unfinished work 'Arcades Project', Benjamin delves into arcaded shopping streets of 19th century Paris. Flâneur wanders around without interacting the crowds, putting a critical distance.

As Georg Simmel discussed, in 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', the dichotomy between the protection of individuality and unbearable pressure of external social forces causes the most persisting problems in modern life. Individual attempts to preserve individuality when faced with the petrifying effect of ever-changing stimuli caused by modern life. Soon, the rapidity of everyday life renders impossible to react against stimulating conditions which in fact construct the urban individuality. Thus, an indifferent attitude that Simmel called 'blasé' prevails in the metropolitan life.[94] Flâneur places "himself" outside the social relations of modern life. Therefore, "he" constructs a free spirit that can overcome the sameness dominating the crowds.

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[93] 'Definitions' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.45. The text originally appeared in SI#1 (1958).
[94] Simmel, Georg. The Metropolis and Mental Life.

As the revolutions of 1848 were defeated, Paris had been redesigned by Baron Haussman as a bourgeois utopia. Narrow streets and arcades that once harbored the idle strolls of the Flâneur, were destructed in order to make room for large boulevards directly connecting the workers' quarters to military barracks. Benjamin evaluates Haussman's Paris as not only a defensive fortification against proletariat uprising but also a demonstration of bourgeois progress and development with large boulevards providing perspectives of monumentalized symbols of civilization.[95]

Andy Merrifield discusses Haussman's plan as a precedent to recent interference to urban fabric by capital. Neo-Haussmanization as he calls has its adversaries united by the discontent it created, marginalized and driven into peripheries. Pioneers of urban revolution would be these sans culottes who populate outer shell of bourgeois utopia.[96] Similarly, situationists observed the necessity to discover the life beyond the dullness of the spaces dominated by the spectacle. In the 24th issue of Potlatch, they recommend to visit slums and ghettos or urban parks; places suitable for play and to avoid visiting large boulevards and squares, tourist attractions.[97] The latter are the homogenous spaces in which the images are passively consumed under total domination of spectacle whereas Jewish quarters or Chinatown offer a playful engagement of everyday life. Hence, dérive is performed according to some predetermined constraints and sways between the contradiction between randomness of chance and conscious prediction of possibilities. For Debord, psychogeographical knowledge differentiate dérive from aimless stroll. Chance factor would diminish as the technique of psychogeographic investigation improves. However, the perfection of psychogeographical observation bears the risk of generating monotonous experiences.[98] Thus, dérive has its own peculiar dependence on randomness.

Dérive cannot be separated from psychogeography which investigates and organizes the effect of geographical environment on individual's emotional and behavioral

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[95] Benjamin, Walter. Paris, Capital of Nineteen Century.
[96] Merrifield, Andy. The New Urban Question (London: Pluto Press, 2014), preface.
[97] 'An Intelligent View of the Avant-Garde at the End of 1955' in Potlatch #24 (November 1954). Retrieved from www.notbored.org.
[98] 'Theory of the Dérive' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.50-51. The text originally appeared in SI#2 (1958).

patterns. Psychogeographical mapping brings various acts of dérive together in a unity of an alternative reading of the city. Partitioned functions of capitalist city are presented as a new narrative based on individual sensation. Mapping is not only a basic way of conveying spatial knowledge but it is also a structuring a set of power relation. The city is the milieu of insurgent powers within which the disruptive capacity of them waits to be uncovered. Mapping as the critique of prevailing representations of urban form by means of adoption and modification into new visualizations of a visionary versions of the city, is a way for exploration. It is a sort of responsive archive open to alterations via cravings of its dwellers.[99] Thus, situationist mapping is a tool to subvert power relations and restructure the city according to individual emotion.

Apart from their orderly and conscious side, dérive and psychogeography resemble psychoanalysis. During dérive sessions players assume different roles and let themselves to the flow of things, interaction with any kind of strangers in a playful manner. For instance, Debord reports an instance of dérive where they encountered an odd Yiddish speaking man in a bar in the Jewish quarters and found themselves chased by two men they saw in the bar until they found refuge in a department store.[100] Eccentricity of the turn of events in such cases of dérive is most of the time fueled by some form of intoxication. For Debord, it was just a matter of attainment to a preferred condition of delirium with help of alcohol and narcotics until the accustomed parts of the city becomes overshadowed by the uncertainity.[101] The traces of surrealist search for 'magic' or 'marvelous' is clear, here. However, as mentioned before, success of a dérive setting lies on the balance between spontaneity and predetermination.

SI also commented on traffic emphasizing the playful, experiential character of travel. Urban planners had mistakenly supposed private automobile as a means of

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[99] McDonough, Tom. 'Delirious Paris: Mapping as a Paranoiac-Critical Activity' in Grey Room #19 (Spring, 2005), pp. 8.
[100] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Two Accounts of the Dérive' in Les Lèvres Nues #9 (November 1956). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.
[101] McDonough, Tom. 'Delirious Paris: Mapping as a Paranoiac-Critical Activity' in Grey Room #19 (Spring, 2005), pp. 10.

transportation. However, it was essentially a commodity of capitalist market and a fetishized symbol of an alienated life. Commuting as an extension of work was a surplus labor that reduces free time. Travel as part of the work must have been abolished and replaced with enjoyment of it.[102] The dissolution of the separations of work and leisure or public and private necessitate the struggle against the partitioned forms of human circulation. As Debord stated:

> "Revolutionary urbanists will not limit their concern to the circulation of things and of human beings trapped in a world of things. They will try to break these topological chains, paving the way with their experiments for a human journey through authentic life."[103]

3.4. Détournement

According to Sadie Plant, the most satisfying English translation for détournement can be located somewhere between 'diversion' and 'subversion'. It is a reversion of existing elements and reestablishment of lost meaning in a new identity as a way for mobilization of inertia caused by the spectacle.[104] As suggested by given words, détournement is both an unexpected appropriation of apparently irrelevant pieces and a destructive action towards the system of relations to which at least one of the components belong. Détournement is both a destructive and creative activity, being both a negation and a dialectical relation at the same time. Détournement simply brings separated fragments of existing cultural elements together under the uniting force of play, therefore emancipating them from the petrifying embrace of the spectacle.[105]

There are many examples of adoption, interpretation, alteration of existing forms in art history that can be evaluated as the antecedent of détournement. Manet's "Olympia" which is a reinterpretation of "Titian's Venus of Urbino" or Picasso's reinterpretation of Velasquez's "Las Meninas" can be regarded as studies to reveal

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[102] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'Situationist Theses on Traffic' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.56-57. The text originally appeared in SI#3 (1959).
[103] Ibid. pp.58.
[104] Plant, Sadie. The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a postmodern age (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 86.
[105] Vaneigam, Raoul. Revolution of Everyday Life (Oakland, CA.: PM Press, 2012), pp.237.

the differences in context. Perhaps one of the most fascinating examples of appropriation is the reuse of a composition similar to Goya's "The Third of May 1808" by Manet and later Picasso to depict unrelated events happened in a different time. Therefore, representations of independent events surpass the spatiotemporal limits and acquire a unique existence associated with each other. Connection between concepts is established by similarity in these examples. According to SI, the power of détournement is derived from its elements' distance from the substance. The most irrelevant parts contribute the most striking effects. What can express Spanish Civil War better than a lipstick advertisement with a slogan like "Pretty lips are red" or what can convey the intensity of suicide more than the classified ads of bars for sale?[106]

Walter Benjamin argues the authenticity of the artistic object and claims that even the immense advancements in reproduction techniques cannot prevent the loss of aura of the artwork, its specific position in time and space.[107] In an age where possibilities of reproduction reach such extents, ritualistic spirit of art starts to dissolve. Emancipated from its dependence to ritual, art ceases to be produced in order to be designed for reproduction.[108] The détournement of artworks that consist of found objects such as Duchamp's ready-mades or Picasso's "Bull's Head" can be discussed in the light of Benjamin. Contrary to previous examples, these were constructed with solely found objects. They can be read as a parody of art to question the status of the artwork when it can be produced with mass produced items, or a playful attempt to stimulate viewer by connecting found objects to an historical and cultural context. Either way, the resulting artwork fails to penetrate the boundaries of bourgeois culture and happens to be a part of spectacle that SI sought to abolish.

Although these projects are accused of compliance with the cultural limitations defined by ruling class by the SI, simplicity in the execution of found object artworks

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[106] Debord, Guy-Ernest and Wolman, Gil. 'Methods of Détournement' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.10. The text originally appeared in Les Lévres Nues #8 (May 1956).
[107] Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in Arendt, Hannah. Ed. Illuminations (New York, NY.: Schoken Books, 1985), pp.220-21.
[108] Ibid., pp.224.

satisfy SI's simple, practical understanding of détournement. Since, détournement is considered as a propaganda tool, rather than an artistic form by SI, it must be delivered with utmost simplicity. Relying on the obscure reminiscence of the original context of the components, additional explanations diminish the impact of détournement.[109] Détournement of SI has to be utilized as a weapon. The most crucial feature of this weapon is the easy and practical method of applying and the potential for continuous reuse. This potential also points to a richness brought about by the double meaning of détournement by the coexistence of old and new meanings.[110] The basic examples of the practicality of détournement are the modifications of comic strips, pornographic images and advertisements. For instance, one of these is fabricated by simply attaching a speech bubble that is written 'I can't think of better than sleeping with an Asturian miner, they're real men' to a pornographic image of a woman. Thus, by simply connecting 1934 strike of Asturian miners and objectification of woman, the criticality is expanded onto subtler issues such as the misogynistic language of the spectacle and masculine tropes of the revolutionaries.

Figure 2: An example of détournement from the SI #9 (1964)

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[109] Debord, Guy-Ernest and Wolman, Gil. 'Methods of Détournement' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.10. The text originally appeared in Les Lévres Nues #8 (May 1956).
[110] 'Détournement as Negation and Prelude' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.10. The text originally appeared in Les Lévres Nues #8 (May 1956).

Another aspect of situationist détournement is avoidance of a rational answer and direct reversal. Debord and Wolman give an instance where some of their comrades proposed to detour an anti-Soviet propaganda poster prepared by a fascist organization called "Peace and Liberty". The poster was consisting of images of Western powers' flags and a slogan: "Union makes strength". Their comrades suggested to attach a smaller script to the poster written: "and coalitions make war". They objected to the project because it was the most direct and rational reaction to such propaganda.[111]

In short, Situationist Détournement differentiates itself from other examples of appropriations of existing cultural elements by locating itself at the boundary of art. As mentioned before, for Debord and SI, art must be transcended in a holistic activity of art and anti-art. Thus, détournement, for SI, in a world dominated by spectacle, is the only possible form of realizing art whilst fighting art.

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[111] Debord, Guy-Ernest and Wolman, Gil. 'Methods of Détournement' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.10-11. The text originally appeared in Les Lévres Nues #8 (May 1956).

CHAPTER 4

REPRESENTATION OF UTOPIA: AN ANALYSIS OF NEW BABYLON

4.1. Temporal Nomadic Town: "Gypsy Encampment"

Constant's break up with SI had happened during a shift in SI's reconditioning its position against art and in general culture. In addition to Constant, most of the artists disconnected with SI. Even though Constant's dismissal had been attributed to his association with other two practicing architects who had built a church, the separation was actually the result of a fundamental divergence as later clarified by Constant. It is derived from how situationists and Constant interpreted unitary urbanism differently. On the contrary to SI's microstructural approach, Constant urged to investigate macrostructure and thought that unelaborated framework of unitary urbanism must be articulated through the critique of city planning. In other words, Constant desired to focus on structural problems of the city while others grappled with the content, "free creation of everyday life."[112] Hence, the enthusiasm he channeled into development of an utopian city brought his short but fruitful participation in SI to an end.

When Constant dedicated himself to New Babylon, he was already established as a prominent artist in CoBrA group. His friendship with Aldo Van Eyck has drawn him closer to architecture. Van Eyck who was responsible for many of the playgrounds in Amsterdam, helped Constant to acquire commissions for playgrounds and playing equipment for children. These projects served Constant to experiment with the system of play which he would develop later in New Babylon.[113] Furthermore, he found the

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[112] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. 'New Babylon—Ten Years On' in Catalogue for Constant-New Babylon Exhibition, Gemeentemuseum (2016), pp.272-273.
[113] Wigley, Mark. The Hyper Architecture of Desire, Exhibition Catalogue for Exhibition in Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art (Rotterdam, 1998), pp.27.

opportunity to enlarge his knowledge of materials and structures. The beginning of New Babylon can be marked by his later work *Ambiance de Jeu* (Ambiance of Play) in 1956 as he designed a spatial organization instead of singular objects.[114]
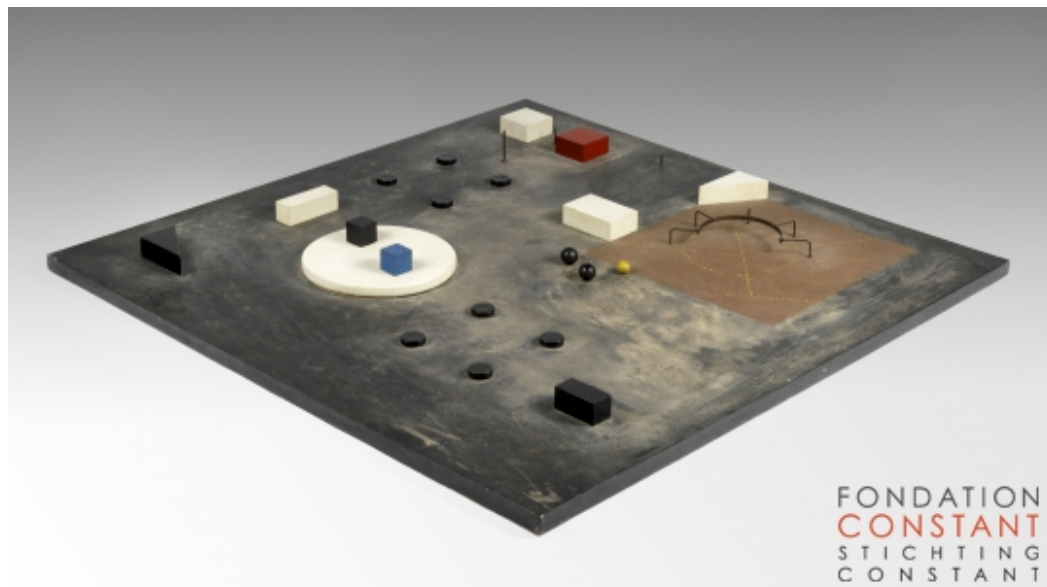

Figure 3: *Ambiance de Jeu*, Constant Nieuwenhuys (1956)

During Alba Conference in December of 1956, Constant encountered Romani people who were banished from the livestock market which they used to utilize for shelter by the town council of Alba. They found refuge in a small land owned by Pinot Galizzio. They would light their fires, put their tents on and by the help of petrol cans, wood planks and caravans, encircle a space for the camp. Impressed by their nomadic life cycle, Constant designed a model for an adjustable structure for them.[115], the "Gypsy Encampment" was the first instance of series of models that Constant made for New Babylon. In the model, an umbrella shaped transparent structure covers part of the space and acts as the center of a spiral of suspended structures. The project does not provide housing or any other type of defined function. It rather implies a potentiality for gypsies to set up their own space using leftover parts. Its vaguely

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[114] Ibid., pp.28
[115] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. New Babylon (Written by Constant, for the exhibition catalogue published by the Haags Gemeetemuseum, The Hague, 1974.)

drawn borders by the short vertical elements hints the unbounded space of the gypsies.

4.2. Playground of Homo Ludens

Constant introduced the label New Babylon as a reference to Babylon of the legends. As the epitome of urban decadence old Babylon represents the modern metropolis with its revival of enchantment with grandeur, technical advancement and spectacle. New Babylon would have become the playful reinterpretation of playful technological city. The name is also a reference to a classic 1929 Soviet film of the same name that rejoiced Paris Commune as New Babylon in response to the labelling of Paris as Babylon by a German newspaper of 1870.[116]

FONDATION
CONSTANT
STICHTING
CONSTANT
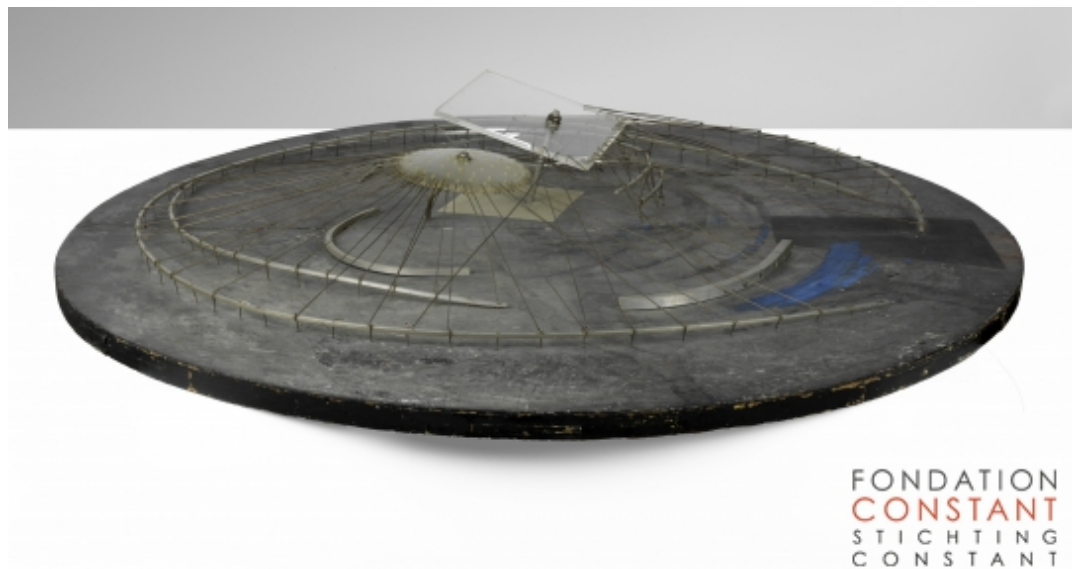
Figure 4: "Gypsy Encampment", Constant Nieuwenhuys (1956)

Just like the legendary Babylon's attempt to reach god had failed and caused the separation of the humanity, modern urban planning caused the separation of people. Constant perpetuated the situationist critique of separation with a greater emphasis on playful and creative nature of the human being. He evaluated modern society as utilitarian regardless of ideology. Both capitalist and socialist societies was based on

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[116] Sadler, Simon. The Situationist City (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), pp.122.

the exploitation of the human potential for working. Referring to Huizinga's assertion of play as the basic characteristic of human nature predating the culture itself, Constant placed ludic society against utilitarian society. For him, the dichotomy between classless society and class society falls short of representing the central conflict of ludic society and utilitarian society. Thus, establishment of social justice does not ensure the conditions for flourishing of human creativity.[117]

Modernist urban planning championed by CIAM and elaborately defined in the charter of Athens, partitions the city into zones of production, leisure, transportation and residence. Its disregard for play element cripples the desire for human creativity. Faced with the destruction of war, European cities had to be reconstructed. Yet, cemeteries of reinforced concrete that leaves the masses to boredom has been constructed. What was the worth of technological advancement unless it is in disposal of human creativity[118]

Another aspect of modern planning was its pragmatic approach to circulation. As also addressed by SI in 'Situationist Theses on Traffic', Constant criticized the over-validation of automobile by modern urbanism. As the ultimate expression of bourgeois prosperity, transportation by car and comfortable image of home dominate the newly constructed neighborhoods. The city was built according to facilitate the circulation of goods. The streets which were in the first place quasi-social spaces ceded to congestions of motor traffic. Diversity of everyday life in the streets faded into boredom of transportation axis. Spontaneous encounters happen rarely and only by chance. Activities of leisure were commercialized by tourism.[119]

The antagonism of Constant against modern urban planning does not correspond to a regressive position such as Ebenezer Howard's Garden City. On the contrary, his reliance on advancement in automation led him to suppose the automation would eventually render the work obsolete. According to Constant, automation in

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[117] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. New Babylon (Written by Constant, for the exhibition catalogue published by the Haags Gemeetemuseum, The Hague, 1974).
[118] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. 'Another City for Another Life' in SI#3. Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.
[119] Ibid. Situationists saw tourism as part the passively consumed spectacle.

production would deplete the need for human labor, thus cause mass unemployment which would in return bring about enormous decline in buying power. Upheaval of capitalist market, after a period of struggle, would ultimately emancipate Homo Ludens from Homo Faber.[120] The disparity between immense development of capacity of production and shrinkage in buying power is not possible to sustain.[121]

4.3. Network of Sectors

Emancipated from work, Homo Ludens would have the endless possibility in time and space. Productive work necessitates the ordering of space according to production process. Not only the workplace but also the residential quarters and other places outside of work are regulated according to productivity. The worker's mobility is restrained by the patterns of production. Similarly, production requires the regulation of time. As in the four zones indicated by Athens Charter, worker is expected to divide time into section for work, rest, leisure and transportation. The dominating element in this division is the work, since it is the only obligatory part. Abolishing of work would emancipate human from spatio-temporal chains. Without work, "sedentary life would lose its raison d'etre".[122]

By taking these basic assumptions, Constant started to develop New Babylon. While at the initial stages the focus of Constant's study was on the freedom of shaping one's own life as they desired through the mobility provided by microstructure, establishment of a planetary network of macrostructure to secure the emancipation of time and space came into prominence during 1960s.[123] New Babylon is both expressed by singular constructions represented by mostly models and the worldwide

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[120] Latin for "man the maker".
[121] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. 'New Babylon—Ten Years On' in Catalogue for Constant-New Babylon Exhibition, Gemeentemuseum (2016), pp.274 and 278. Constant acknowledges the capital's sinister strategies of uneven geographical development so as to keep an immediate outlet market at disposal of developed economies. By every means of political and military meandering, capital tries to survive. Assumption that increasing automation would ensure the downfall of capitalism seems largely an oversimplification.
[122] Ibid., pp.275.
[123] Ibid., pp.276.

network of those constructions represented by either photomontages or collages as juxtaposed with existing city maps.

The smallest component of New Babylon is "sector". It is one of the links that constitute the network. The sector is the fundamental construction in which an artificial environment is assembled. To allow for mobile interior structure, permanent macrostructure has to be as neutral as possible. The macrostructure in its purest form is composed of A couple of horizontal planes pierced by vertical elements that connected planes to each other and ground and several fixed cores for services.[124] Constant employed various forms and structural schemes for his models. For instance, three different model he made in 1961 incorporates different structural systems. Orient Sector is elevated by pilotis and box shaped masses while Hanging Sector is suspended on three masts and famous Yellow Sector is elevated on piers. While mostly using rectilinear forms, Constant once again returns to circular and spiral forms for the Spatiovores of the 1959.
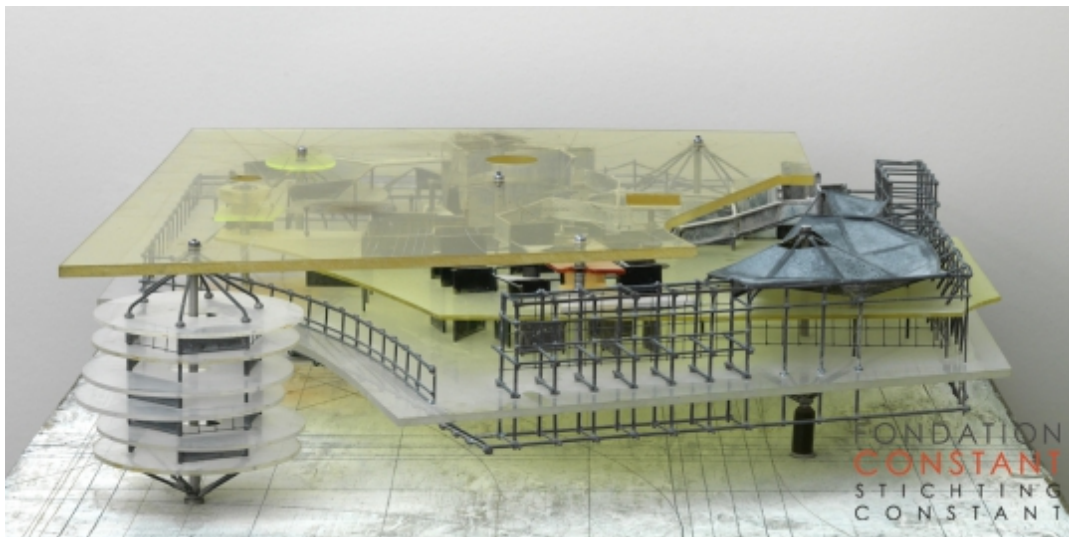

Figure 5: Yellow Sector, Constant Nieuwenhuys (1961)

Yellow sector constitutes the first iteration of series of promenades of New Babylon. Yet it is sufficient structurally and programmatically to itself. Constant vaguely

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[124] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. New Babylon (Written by Constant, for the exhibition catalogue published by the Haags Gemeetemuseum, The Hague, 1974).

implies that it has a real site located at the edge of the city. Large horizontal planes disrupt interior from natural lighting, ventilation etc. Artificial environmental conditioning of interior is for enhancement of a specific ambiance rather than the recreation of natural climate. Automated flexibility and mobility of the spatial arrangement dissolves the boundaries of interior and achieves the "complete suppression of volumes".[125] Contrary to creation of various quarters such as the "Happy," the "Bizarre," the "Sinister," etc. suggested by Chtcheglov in 'Formulary for a New Urbanism', Constant avoided to strictly distinguish different ambiances. His identification of the sector refers to their material attributes.[126] Although he speculated on the ambiances of the sector such as "the loud room", "the room of echoes", "the room of images", "the room of coincidences" etc., these are rather adventurous wanderings on possible ambiances than a rigid program.[127] New Babylon's abstract spatiality differs greatly from the thematic determinations of entertainment architecture. According to Constant, definitiveness of the forms lessens the active engagement of the observer. New Babylon's labyrinthine spaces provide the artistic means for collective creation of constructed situations.[128]

4.4. City of Continuous Drift

Alteration of environment which made possible by technical control over their components, constitutes the foundation of New Babylonian culture. Each inhabitant of New Babylon has equal capacity to control the bits and pieces that make up the environment. Their individual desires are not ordered hierarchically. Thus, their confounding vision for the environment results in an ever changing environment.[129]

Constant claims that environment has a great effect on individuals. In New Babylon, each individual has the power to modify environment, hence affects the others via

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[125] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. 'Description of the Yellow Zone' in SI#4 (June, 1960). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.
[126] Sadler, Simon. The Situationist City (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), pp.139.
[127] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. Ibid.
[128] Sadler, Simon. Ibid., pp.141.
[129] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. New Babylon (Written by Constant, for the exhibition catalogue published by the Haags Gemeetemuseum, The Hague, 1974).

environment while being affected by them. Consequently, highly augmented interaction between individuals and continuous change in the environment prevent the development of habitual patterns. Sectors continually change form and ambiance consistent with the buoyant population. Returning to same place becomes impossible. Because of the disorienting environment, a social 'model of behavior' that relies on repetitive behavior does not exist. Just as an artist does not repeat their works, New Babylonians does not repeat their actions.[130] Therefore, we may deduce that New Babylonians are the performers of art that merged with everyday life as the avant-garde desired.

Drifting in New Babylon is not the means but the ends. Independent from social and environmental constrains as well as the spatiotemporal ones, there is no force that ties New Babylonians to land. Therefore, they drift along the sectors that cover the surface of the world. Since they would participate in the active transformation of the environment, theirs is different from the tourists' passive travel through spectacle.

4.5. Reading New Babylon

Evaluation of New Babylon in accordance with situationist theories and critical tools as well as Constant's own principles of unitary urbanism reveals several contradictions. In addition to these, there are other points of discontent which originates from categorical position of utopia. Therefore, in order to discuss New Babylon's controversial chapters, inquiry on its categorical position is crucial at the first place. Evaluation of utopianism as a critical method for improvement of society is a too extensive subject that exceeds the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, it is crucial to illustrate some of the remarks on this issue in terms of determining New Babylon's position as a utopian project.

Utopianism has often seen as the diversion of revolutionary forces to simple wish fulfillment or escapist fantasy. On the other hand, totalitarian connotations of it was argued by the likes of Karl Popper.[131] However, Levitas claims that persistent

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[130] Ibid.
[131] Levitas, Ruth. The Concept of Utopia (Bern: Peter Lang AP, 2010), pp.3.

accusation against utopia for being "systemic, static and authoritarian" is based on a restricted description of utopia and a biased selection of previous attempts.[132] She suggests to enlarge the definition of utopia to include every "expression of the desire for better way of being". Thus it can allow contradictory interpretations exist simultaneously.[133]

Harvey criticizes the division of spatiotemporal aspects of utopia. He states that in the tradition of utopia, a spatial structure is presented as isolated from time. In what he calls 'utopias of spatial form' imaginary spatial structure dominates social processes and prevents temporal change. Dialectics of social fluctuation thereby history is excluded from geographical and social form. For example, More's Utopia is of this kind as the perfected, homogenized form of society is frozen. Closure as making something and inherent authority is the serious problem of this kind of utopias. On the other hand, there are the 'utopias of process' where the spatiality and ultimately coming to a closure is neglected. Utopia of the free market is an example of this kind since it is the the utopia of its own process. Harvey finds the corruption of utopia in this separation as the rigid spatial materialization of spatial utopia conflicts with the specificities of social process that indented to create them while process utopianism conflicts with the impossibilities of spatial construction that is essential for its materialization. Thus, a certain amount of negotiation occurs during their realization leading to their distortion as mostly resulted the opposite of intention.[134]

Harvey proposes a different conception of utopia. He reminds Marx's refutation of both Adam Smith's utopia of process and utopian socialism as spatial form utopia while also recalling that Marx and Engels discussed that there are points in history at the embryonic stage of conflicting social forces, an imaginary view of forthcoming society as the initial desire for a complete transformation of society. His suggestion

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[132] Levitas, Ruth. 'On dialectical utopianism' in History of the Human Sciences (Vol. 16), pp.144.
[133] Levitas, Ruth. Op.Cit., pp.9.
[134] Harvey, David. Spaces of Hope (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.179-180.

is to integrate two aspects of utopianism, thus formulating a more dialectical form of utopianism.[135]

Ernst Bloch approaches utopia as a necessary element for transformative movement. He classifies utopia in two categories: abstract utopia and concrete utopia. Concrete utopia is associated with power of anticipation whereas abstract utopia is related with compensatory elements. In other words, concrete utopias are the ones that constitute possibilities about a future, better life. Abstract and concrete utopias are found intermingled in the utopian studies. Thus, it is essential to extract anticipatory elements and cleanse them from the compensatory elements. Nevertheless, even the most abstract version of escapist, wishful thinking utopianism is superior to pessimism for its fascination with the possibility of a better life.[136]

Lefebvre remarks on the dialectical relationship of past and present so that future possibilities must be foreshadowed in present. He proposes notion of transduction which arrives at a virtual possibility by means of given reality, where traditional applications fall short.[137] For Lefebvre, utopia is the paramount notion of urban space that penetrates the fragments that withstand homogenization and rationalization, thus unifying differences. The difference in urban space arise from the bits and pieces that generate it. "Contrasts, oppositions, superpositions, and juxtapositions replace separation, spatiotemporal distances".[138]

Regarding given assessment, it may be deduced that there must be a dialectical relationship between the content, form and context of utopia. For Lefebvre and Bloch, utopia's transformative force and potential to stimulate possibility is depended on its relationship to present reality. Harvey concludes essentially a similar point of view yet bases his argument on the duality between spatial and temporal aspects of utopia.

McDonough praises New Babylon as an "experimental utopia" as he borrowed the term from Lefebvre. Experimental utopia is the discovery of all fantastic deviations

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[135] Ibid., 195-196.
[136] Levitas, Ruth. The Concept of Utopia (Bern: Peter Lang AP, 2010), pp.103-104.
[137] Lefebvre, Henri. Critique of Everyday Life. Vol.II (London: Verso, 2002), pp.117-118.
[138] Lefebvre, Henri. The Urban Revolution (Minneapolis, MN: 2003), pp.125.

of human potentiality while perpetually challenged and supported by the criticism of the complications of reality.[139] McDonough exemplifies Gypsy encampment as a departure from a concrete problematic and arrival to a visionary solution and one of Constant's reviews as his impressions of the day's media. Thus, he states labelling New Babylon as a utopian project does not suffice since it goes beyond the limitations of abstract utopia. In the case of Gypsy encampment, Romani people becomes "emblematic of a broader condition of populations trapped in a paradoxical topological position".[140] Gypsy camp or in general the models, drawings, paintings that constitute New Babylon, according to McDonough, are conceived in response to mainly two issues that associated with each other intrinsically in the traumatized unconscious of post war avant-gardists. First, there was the shortage of living space left by the devastation of war. Constant sought to abolish settlement altogether instead of responding the question. Second, hideous memory of the holocaust; mass murders and concentration camps hadn't come to cease yet. Roma as one of the peoples of which Nazism planned the total annihilation, exemplifies the radical exteriority. McDonough sees gypsy camp as a response to concentration camp. He also rightfully claims that postwar modern urbanism as a response to immediate need of mass housing is identified with the rational brutality of the Nazi death camp for Constant and SI. He gives two consecutive sequences in which political prisoners in a concentration camp is matched with inhabitants of a Parisian housing project in Debord's 1973 film The Society of the Spectacle for an example.[141] We may also recall Constant's labelling of postwar housing as "concrete cemeteries".[142]

Violeau, based upon the similarities between New Babylon and its contemporary projects like the works of Team 10 and Yona Friedman, asserts that there are contradictory aspects between the design of New Babylon and Constant's utopian agenda. Existence of sectors that defines patterns of circulation, at the first place is in

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[139] McDonough, Tom. 'Experimental Utopia and Traumatic Memory in Constant's New Babylon' in Grey Room (No. 33, Fall, 2008), pp.85.
[140] Ibid., pp.87-88.
[141] Ibid., pp.88-90.
[142] Nieuwenhuys, Constant. 'Another City for Another Life' in SI#3. Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

contradiction to free drifting. Themes of standardization and rationalization of production seems mandatory for the realization of New Babylon for Constant. However, these are in constant conflict with mobility and flexibility.[143] This issue is connected with Harvey's comment on the contamination of ideal utopianism of social process by the material imperatives.[144] Furthermore, functional zoning is also apparent in New Babylon, not inside of the Macrostructure but outside. The inhabitants of New Babylon are separated from the ground and sky by the horizontal slabs. Thus, Violeau claims that Constant reintroduces the "separate" as the way to achieve "unitary".[145] Contrast between the permanent structure and its flexible interior is intriguing. Although the suppression of volumes by the usage of horizontal surfaces is intended, the boundaries by the elevation of structure are still existing.

Another significant point is the captivating difference in the representations of New Babylon. Heynen argues that drawings, paintings, and sketches reflect an important aspect that models dismiss. The dissonance absent in the models is apparent in these. Models reflect only the transitory face of the project of modernity. Qualities of "peace, repose, and harmony" that are in continual struggle with the themes of "dynamism, permanent change and harmony". Such a homogeneous society which individuals are so cooperatively submitted, seems only possible by the existence of oppression. Heynen interprets this as "the impossibility of giving utopia a concrete form and of making poetry the only moment of reality…"[146]

4.6. Conclusion: SI and the New Babylon

The critiques insofar have all valid arguments. New Babylon can be evaluated as an experimental utopia while bearing the all difficulties of giving utopia a concrete shape. To conclude this chapter, an attempt to analyze New Babylon in consideration of critical methods that SI provided. One of the claims of this thesis is that the

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[143] Violeau, Jean Louis. The Bitter Victory of the Situationist International. In: Goldhagen, Sarah Williams. ed. Anxious Modernisms (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000), pp.253.
[144] Harvey, David. Spaces of Hope (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.179-180.
[145] Violeau, Jean Louis. Op.Cit.
[146] Heynen, Hilde. Architecture and Modernity (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT press, 2001), pp. 172-174.

application of situationist tools is limited to critique of existing conditions. When they are employed for creation from scratch, they fail the objectives.

New Babylon's most prominent motives are dérive and ludic behavior. Dérive is used for extraordinary trip to an alternative reality to break away from the spectacle dominated banality. Aims is to disorient oneself to excavate a knowledge that contested areas of urban space reserves. Thus, it is substantial for dérive to incorporate heterotopic, differential spaces that are not utterly conquered by spectacle. The reason behind particular acts of dérive is to obtain a distorted map of the city. In New Babylon dérive starts to lose its critical importance, because disorientation dissolves if the opposite is not available. Mapping is meaningless, since it is already mapped. Constant's emphasis on macrostructure cripples the potentialities of movement.

New Babylon presents all the means for construction of situations except for the actual experimental behavior. Everything is automated; every aspect of environment is changed by the pressing of a button. Construction of a situation is then achieved in simply seconds. Nevertheless, it cannot be separated from the praxis of everyday life. Constructed situation is not the result of an action; it is rather the action itself as a fragment of a transformative process.

What mostly neglected by Constant is détournement that constitutes the backbone of situationist critique. Either Lefebvre's experimental utopia or Harvey's desire to formulate a new utopianism are corresponded by détournement, since it is the method of connecting material conditions and imaginary yearnings. It is actually the mode of attitude that governs other methods of critique for the SI. Therefore, it can be the fundamental reason for the contradictory representation of New Babylon.
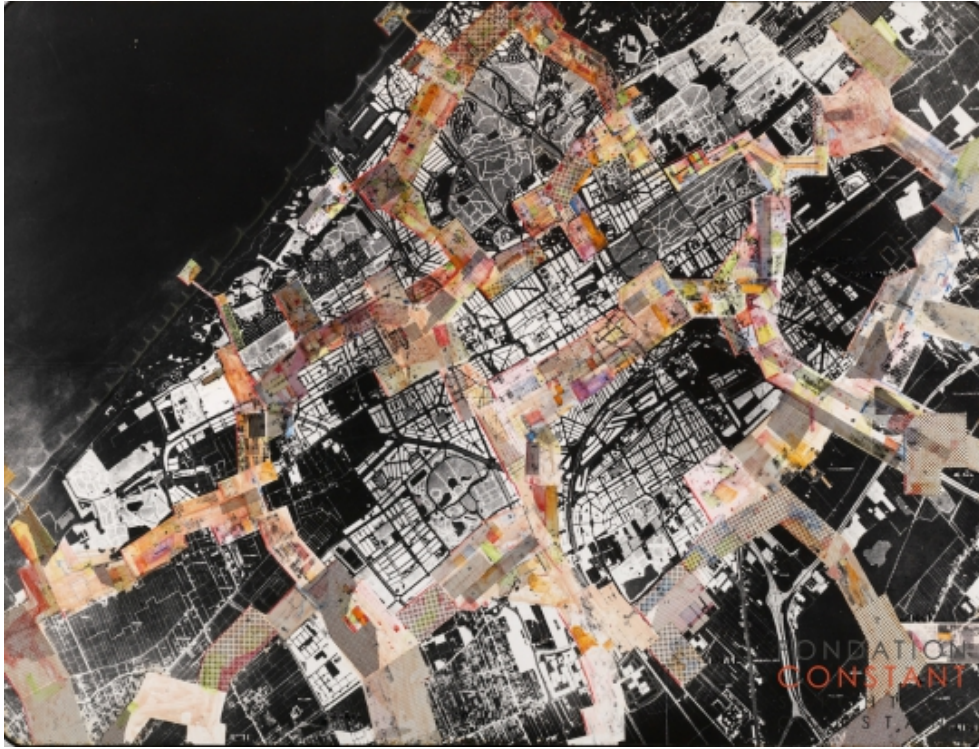
Figure 6: Ground Plan of New Babylon over The Hague

This issue can be expanded with examples from New Babylon's paper representations and Constant's previous artistic career with regards to Heynen's critique of materialization of utopia. Many maps of New Babylon that are overlapped with existing European cities can be given as example. Moreover, circular and spiral forms that appear in his paintings as in the wheel form as the representations of destruction caused by war, reveals the traumatic character of his work. As McDonough put it: "What we find in Constant's models for this experimental utopia is not so much an exploration of possible future forms of urbanism but a concern with the very determinants of urban design after the demise of the traditional city".[147]

Debord's and Constant's understandings of unitary urbanism was differential at some point, despite being fundamentally similar. Debord urged to avoid aesthetic

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[147] McDonough, Tom. 'Experimental Utopia and Traumatic Memory in Constant's New Babylon' in Grey Room (No. 33, Fall, 2008), pp.91,93.

applications altogether for a new description of collective formation. Debord and the SI never felt the need to abandon the existing city for a new kind. "They would not be exiled to a New Babylon in the way that the Jews had been exiled to the old Babylon".[148] Architectural détournement should find its source in existing architecture, existing city and historical praxis.[149] However, investigation of a thought provoking project like New Babylon always brings new reflections as long as it is embraced by its full multiplicity; its evolution in time and the contradictions it carries. Maybe, for the conception of a new architecture there should be a reconciliation between New Babylon and SI, macrostructure and microstructure, permanent and temporal, spatial form and social process etc.

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[148] Sadler, Simon. The Situationist City (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), pp.121.
[149] McDonough, Tom. 'Fluid Spaces: Constant and the Situationist Critique of Architecture' in Wigley, Mark and DeZegher, Catherine ed. The Activist Drawing: Retracing Situationist Architectures from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), pp.102.

CHAPTER 5

IN SEARCH FOR SITUATIONIST ARCHITECTURES

5.1. SI on Architecture

> "Architecture is always the ultimate achievement of intellectual and artistic evolution, the materialization of an economic stage. Architecture is the final point in the achievement of any artistic endeavor because the creation of architecture implies the construction of an environment and the establishment of a way of life."[150]

Architecture and urbanism along with art was a central subject of SI's early period. However, SI's conception of architecture barely supersedes that of surrealism of which they have been much critical. There are two aspects of architecture for SI: modifiability, changeability that comes from the play element and a fascination of the extraordinary and marvelous. As early as 1953, Chtcheglov gives the formulation of new architecture that reflects these two notions. Architecture of tomorrow must be modifiable. It will be responsive to the desires of its occupants. He also indicates that future city will be arranged with irrational conglomeration of fantastic architectural and natural objects. "It would be the baroque stage of urbanism considered as a means of knowledge".[151]

Asger Jorn's antagonistic approach to functionalism was very influential for SI's critique of architecture. Jorn favored spontaneous, materialist, oriental, Dionysian over classical, idealist, European, Apollonian. For him, natural art is to achieve natural form without trying to imitate nature directly.[152] He identified the division or

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[150] Jorn, Asger. 'Architecture for Life' in Potlatch #15 (22 Dec. 1954). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu

[151] Chtcheglov, Ivan. 'Formulary for a New Urbanism' in in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.2. The text originally appeared in Internationale Situationniste #1 (October, 1953).

[152] Wollen, Peter. 'Situationists and Architecture' in New Left Review (Mar-Apr 2001), pp.124.

architectural elements into supporting, isolating, enclosing elements with division of cities to districts for different groups. For Jorn, these were artificial divisions operated by functionalists. Modern design should be inspired by the organic unity of natural, material life. He also suggested to criticize and develop the conception of functionalist urbanism. Urbanism of the functionalism was the establishment of the framework for living. This rational framework should be replaced with an artistic way which incorporates all branches of art.[153]

Projects that defied the boundaries of instrumental reason by eccentric individuals fascinated situationists. 19th century Bavarian King Ludwig's strange palaces, grottos, follies were placed at top of the mountains. The king had performed truly an architecture of the desire. Palais Idéal built by Postman Cheval in years of hard work was even more impressive considering Ludwig's capabilities as a king. A postman had created the building of his dreams in more than three decades collecting suitable rocks and stones even at work.[154] Dedication of Postman Cheval to build a personal palace reminds Chtcheglov's phrase 'Everyone will live in their own personal "cathedral"'.[155] Both Ludwig and Cheval were saluted in Potlatch for being psychogeographical in royalty and psychogeographical in architecture respectively.[156] Another inspiring figure for situationists is Kurt Schwitters who built his own "cathedral of erotic misery". His Merzbau was a single room intensely stuffed with symbolic objects that reflect his wild fantasy world. Schwitters was probably more appropriate example for SI than crazy king or compulsive postman.[157]

Sadler rightfully evaluates situationist interpretation of architecture and urbanism as "a technological baroque".[158] Their fascination with bizarre is based on their exaggerated hatred of modern functionalism. They attempted to seize the dissident potential within those projects. However, the sensational, eclectic qualities of those

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153 Ibid., pp.129.
154 Ibid., pp.126-127.
155 Chtcheglov, Ivan. Op.Cit.
156 'Exercise in Psychogeograph' in Potlatch #2 (1954)
157 Wollen, Peter. Ibid., pp.127-128.
158 Sadler, Simon. The Situationist City (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), pp.110.

may be quite well incorporated by spectacle. Their approach to postwar modernism is often biased and antagonistic. Though, it is understandable since their disappointment with postwar reconstruction was immense.

Considering situationist theories and the criticism of New Babylon, situationist architecture can be placed somewhere between visionary utopianism and continuous struggle over space of everyday life. To define a framework, architectural admirations of SI should be discarded for their real contribution; their critical tools: dérive, détournement and constructed situations. Then, two main characteristics can be derived for situationist architectures. Firstly, it should be a collective activity or at least should incorporate collective production of space. Secondly, it should be somehow related with détournement. In other words, it should be a conscious critique through appropriation of existing architecture.

5.2. Collective Architecture

Maudlin and Vellinga approach architecture from perspective of the consumption process of buildings. They offer to correspond to an attitude of architecture that considers buildings as fixed objects of art; and suggest to discuss "busy, complex, meaningful and creative lives of buildings after they have been designed and constructed". The meaning and value is often dedicated to design and building process. The period after photographs were taken and occupants moved in is considered "decline".[159] Throughout its life, a building undergoes countless changes under influence of countless actors who all infuse their particular value and meaning. Thus, architecture is the summation of its production and consumption as cultural processes.[160] Despite the fact that these assessments maintain valuable insight, the negative connotations of the word consumption is associated with decline or commodification. However, buildings are reproduced on a daily basis as part of the the produced social space.

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[159] Maudlin, Daniel and Vellinga, Marcel. Ed. Consuming Architecture: On the Consumption, Appropriation and Interpretation of Buildings (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.1.
[160] Ibid., pp.4.

Maudlin and Vellinga indicate the presence of an attitude which struggles to surpass the border of time between the production and consumption cycles of architecture and approximate possible future scenarios for their building. They classify these tendencies as flexible design, participatory design and incomplete design. Flexible design has a long tradition in modern architecture that can be traced back to Rietveld's Schroder House, 1924. New Babylon can also be located among these. Participatory design incorporates clients into design process, exemplified by Giancarlo de Carlo's social housing project at Terri, Italy and Lucien Kroll's project for Leuven University. Incomplete design aims to provide necessary permanent services and leave the development of building to users. Alejandro Aravena's Quinta Monroy social housing in Chile is the most recent and appropriate example of this approach.[161]

While these projects attempt to engage in a persistent problematic of modern architecture in terms of producer-consumer contradiction, collective production of architecture can be advanced to a point where architect is entirely excluded. As Lefebvre indicated space is not the empty Cartesian container for the social relations to occur inside. On the contrary it is a social product.[162] The production of social space is thus distinctive from the production of commodities. It is both a necessary prerequisite and a consequence of social superstructures, both a product of social relations and a means to produce social relations.[163] Therefore, struggle for the transformation of society should incorporate space as not as an empty background but as an active manifestation of desired space. For Lefebvre: "Every society — and hence every mode of production […] –produces a space, its own space".[164] Thus, every movement that determined to transform society is bounded to be interested in spatial production. Meanwhile, struggle for urban space is unavoidably related to transformation of society. In this regard, entirety of the urban struggle over space

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[161] Ibid., pp.5.
[162] Lefebvre, Henri. The Production of Space (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), pp.30.
[163] Ibid., pp.85.
[164] Ibid., pp.31.

where each time a kernel of revolutionary space is experimented, is part of the spatial-social transformative process.

From Paris Commune of 1871 to 1968 May, or to recent occupy movements revealed the impromptu experiments with architecture. Most recently, during Gezi Park protests, started as a small-scale environmentalist demonstration escalated by the disproportionate police brutality into a country wide protests and resulted in six dead and thousands of injured. According to Batuman, resistance was not only based on political significance of the Taksim Square but it was also a response to "gentrification of the city center and the politicization of every- day life to defend public space—the very locale in which it flourished". Despite the very heterogeneous composition of protesters varying from far left organizations to liberal, from LGBT communities to anti-capitalist Muslims, they managed to contribute to reproduction of public space by means of the presence of commonalities on their diverse individual interests.[165] As an astonishing expression of direct democracy, their distinct agendas are reflected through discussion and debate in the immediately established committees. Attempt of direct democracy experienced in Gezi, has been further tried to be maintained through neighborhood forums with the aim of transforming it to lasting political instrument.[166]

In the aftermath of Gezi, when the riots settled down except few minuscule protests, Taksim Square was accommodated to politicization of space via state sponsored fast breaking organizations in Ramadan. Banished from the square, the protesters responded with their own version fast breaking. Improvised ground tables lining up along İstiklal Street, conceived voluntarily by a collective effort were in sharp contrast with the standardized tables of the state promoted organization.[167] This collective feast can be related to potlatch, the gift giving festival of American natives, which also is the name of SI's previous incarnation LI's journal.

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[165] Batuman, Bülent. '"Everywhere Is Taksim": The Politics of Public Space from Nation-Building to Neoliberal Islamism and Beyond' in Journal of Urban History (Vol 41/5, 2015), pp.899.
[166] Ibid., pp.900-901.
[167] Ibid., pp.901.

During, Gezi protests, protesters expressed the determination to claim and reshape their environment. Flimsy, improvised shelters constructed using waste materials, debris of the construction site, whatever they could find combined with tents were built collectively. In some cases, these were used for functions other than sheltering. For instance, a temporal library built with salvaged wood planks is fascinating. In other case, to exhibit photographs of revolutionary moments and objects taken from police like helmets, a museum dedicated to revolution was opened in container which was occupied appropriated from construction workers.[168] Plural language of the protests was visible from the façade of the museum which was covered with flags of left wing organizations, comic book covers, and prints of the Quran verses etc. Another examples include speaker's point open to everyone and a small garden. With its architecture, own humorous language, heroic figures (woman in red, the man who reads books to police etc.), Gezi created a legacy that somehow continued in the form of guerilla gardening in cases such as *"100.yıl bostanı"*.

What can be the architect's role in these spontaneous urban uprisings? Architects failed to respond the will of the crowds. In the case of Gezi, an architecture association prepared line drawings of improvised constructions built during protests.[169] However, this post production is far from being of any significance. Architects should lead the collective architecture of urban uprising.

5.3. Situationist Architecture as Architectural Act

> "You cannot buy the Revolution. You cannot make the Revolution. You can only be the Revolution. It is in your spirit or, it is nowhere."[170]

Each new inquiry of New Babylon brings about genuine ideas as well as a lot of challenges. Within amazingly rich and various elements that constitute New Babylon, it is possible to find both most emancipatory aspects of human creation as well as the

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[168] Ibid., pp.899.
[169] for '#Occupy Gezi Architecture' fanzine prepared by *Herkes İçin Mimarlık* see https://issuu.com/herkesicinmimarlik/docs/oga_fanzin_salt
[170] LeGuin, Ursula K. The Dispossessed.

implications of terrible authoritarianism. By the years of evolution and its responsive relationship with material conditions, New Babylon is truly an experimental utopia.

Assumption of this thesis was that examination of contradictory presence of New Babylon in consideration of SI would have assist to deduce anew architectural practice. Despite its unceasing utopianism and critical position to current form of society, New Babylon's totalizing architecture gives the clues of architecture's limits. Entirety of architecture can be considered as spatial form utopias in Harvey's terms. However, in order to get built they get contaminated, forces of social process corrupt their ideal physical qualities. They must compromise with the dominant ideology to a point where their radicalism is an empty image.[171] New Babylon's paper architecture avoids this criticism to a degree since it doesn't pursue to get built. Nonetheless, as soon as it starts to materialize, it starts to lose its disharmonious character.

New Babylon's power lies in the multiplicity of its representation instead of its static forms of materializations. As a project that embodies the negation of present society, it has to incorporate its adversary. It has to reveal the oppression and domination, not cover them behind a veil of techno optimism. As Heynen stated: "Its truth lies in its negativity and in the dissonances that continually pervade its image of harmony and well-being."[172]

The task which Harvey identified is to formulize a new kind of utopianism which revolutionize the space time relationship.[173] It still begs to be discovered. Literary utopias, LeGuin's The Dispossessed per se, achieved the ambivalent spatiotemporal structure in my opinion. Levitas discusses utopian examples as often 'holistic, imaginary, critical, normative, prescriptive and (often) future-oriented' despite descriptions of present is also given most of the time. In relation with utopia and with an effort to achieve a more dialectical utopianism, heterotopias as localizable utopias as Foucault pointed out, may reflect a similar outcome from a different point of view.

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[171] Levitas, Ruth. 'On dialectical utopianism' in History of the Human Sciences (Vol. 16), pp.140.
[172] Heynen, Hilde. Architecture and Modernity (The MIT press, 2001), pp.175.
[173] Harvey, David. Spaces of Hope (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp.196.

Thus, following characteristics of heterotopia may enhance the view of utopianism: 'fragmentary, concrete, value free, descriptive, present-past oriented.[174]

Another duality that needs to be compromised is related with the production of everyday life. Certeau differentiates strategies and tactics as elements in the production of everyday life. Strategies are related with producers of spaces; architects and planners, the institutions and power structures behind them whereas tactics are related with consumers of spaces; individuals who carry out tactics within the framework defined by strategies. "In short, space is a practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers."[175] Situationist architecture is very much related with these tactics. The disagreement between Constant and SI is based on the former's reliance on the necessity of strategical –or in Constant's terms macrostructural framework. Similar to utopia-heterotopia duality, for a conception of experimental, dialectical utopianism this macro-micro structure or strategy-tactic duality must be superseded. This utopianism is only possible with a vague final solution that is open to radical change in mind, and a firm reliance on everyday material life.

Lefebvre's heterotopia characterizes the space of difference as not only a possibility but also a necessity for the description of a revolutionary movement. Heterotopic space is not the outcome of the revolution. Lefebvre's theory of revolutionary movement is the exact opposite. Such heterotopic organizations would gather in an improvised way to envision the possibilities of collective movement in an ephemeral moment, thus creating something entirely different.[176] Similarly, situationist architecture would be initiated by the small groups organized bottom that comes together in instances.

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[174] Johnson, Peter. Some reflections on the relationship between utopia and heterotopia (2012). Retreieved from http://www.heterotopiastudies.com.
[175] DeCerteau, Michel. The Practice of Everyday Life (Berkley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1988), pp.117.
[176] Harvey, David. Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution (London: Verso, 2012), preface.

Debord realized the impossibility of challenging the dominant order without challenging all of its structural elements.[177] However, he also claimed that it is possible to challenge spectacle-commodity economic structure in an individual scale.[178] Each individual action contribute to the agglomeration of a tactical vocabulary against the dominant forms of language. "What do Tunisia and Iceland have in common?" asks Castells. Nothing other than the resentment felt through the displacement and dispossession accomplished by the forces of capital. The protests expanded to a global scale by referring themselves as in the New York Zucotti park occupiers naming their encampment Tahrir square or Spanish insurgents chanting Iceland is the solution. The common ground that connects those people from various cultural and economic background is the empowerment they felt through the network of insurgence.[179]

SI's view on architecture, their affection for bizarre architectures, although worth studying, does not reflect the essence of their critique. Previously given example of a psychogeographic game constitutes a more suitable illustration.[180] Thus, the exploration of possible applications of situationist critical tools: constructed situation, dérive and détournement presents a more fruitful discussion. Situationist critical tools provide both a design repertoire and a guide to destruct that design in single unified transcendence of architecture. Thus, situationist architecture does not have to be an end result, closure in Harvey's terms. It is rather a compilation of collective, critical action that involves existing architecture in some way.

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[177] Debord, Guy. "On the Passage of a Few Persons Through a Rather Brief Period of Time", from "Soundtracks of Two Films by Guy Debord". In: Knabb, Ken ed. trans. Situationist International Anthology (Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), pp.30.
[178] Debord, Guy-Ernest. 'The Decline and Fall of Spectacle-Commodity Economy' in Knabb, Ken. Ed. Trans. Situationist International Anthology (Berkeley, CA.: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1989), pp.155. The text originally appeared in SI#10 (December, 1965).
[179] Castells, Manuel. Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), pp.20-21.
[180] 'Psychogeographical Game of the Week' in Potlatch #1 (June 1954). Retrieved from www.cddc.vt.edu.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

REFLECTIONS ON ARCHITECT'S ROLE

In the concluding chapter, I want to address several issues regarding the spectacle commodity economy and architecture's condition within and against it. Thus far, theories of situationists and other avant-gardes were centered around disconnection of art from the praxis of everyday life and different stances taken for the unification of them. SI's strategy was to yearn for the transcendence of art through its realization and negation at the same time. Architecture constitutes a rather insignificant portion of the polemics. However, arguments on art are often expanded into the field of architecture. In any case, situationist theory is advocated to present the instruments required for the critique of urbanism and architectural edifice. Besides, architecture as a discipline is yet to describe its relation to art.

Architecture has an ambivalent position between unbounded creativity and compliance to social reality. Peggy Deamer evaluates architect as worker, as part and parcel of the labor while indicating the contradictory points about the profession's current operational organization. She represents architects' problematic relationship with work that appear in the form of a divine commitment to the profession. This almost religious involvement with work originates from architecture's detachment and isolation from work. First, architecture with the belief that it produces neither simple commercial goods nor services but rather designs, positions itself outside of both the production of commodities and service sector. Thus, architects believe that they don't work. Secondly, architecture is divided into design and construction, and disassociates itself from the work, from the problems of working class that build the

designs.[181] Thus, architects have become drawn apart from an issue so close to their disciplinary life. This establishes a form of alienation that is specific to architects. Architects unlike other white collar professions are obliged to engage in the realization process of their design. However, we are so much enchanted by the image of the object and cultural significance of our work that we fetishize the final product and lose the contact with the processes that engender it.

Here, the direction of the discussion turns into sphere of art again. Deamer explains architecture's detachment from work with dichotomy of art and work. She indicates two points of view regarding art and work. First opinion is that mental, artistic production is related to material, technical production. Under the dominance of capital, artist's production is also subordinated to commodity structures.[182] The second opinion rejects the idea that work is inherently boring, non-creative or unaesthetic.[183] Work's banality is stems from capitalist productive relations. Deamer considers both approaches as valid and necessary:

> "Just as the tradition of art-as-labor suggests that architecture as a profession should consider "labor value," the tradition that sees human work as inherently imaginative, creative, and self-realizing should be equally embraced by architects. Creativity in architecture rests not on an ever-expanding categorical inclusion of form-making but rather on an imaginative approach to problem solving."[184]

According to Deamer, remarks from these two arguments draw similar conclusions for the future of work: "creativity applied not to object-making but to process; destabilization; organizational flexibility; planned obsolescence; empowering the autonomy of the worker."[185] Design transformed into information based cognitive process where given conditions and rules are evaluated for a precise responses. It is now a problem solving activity rather than object creating. Architectural work is now divided among various collaborators instead of being done by a single subject. She

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[181] Deamer, Peggy. 'Work' in Deamer, Peggy.Ed. The Architect as Worker (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp.61-62.
[182] Ibid., pp.64-65.
[183] Ibid., pp. 63.
[184] Ibid., pp.67.
[185] Ibid., pp.72.

claims that if we, architects embrace these developments and assume the concept that our *"knowledge/service is spatial, material and organizational innovation"*, our place in the social relations and compensation for our work will be changed. For reevaluation of our compensation, it is a must to understand that value of our work rely on the knowledge, not on the object. Furthermore, object based understanding reinforces piece-work system that establish the basis for the hierarchic organization of the exploitation.[186]

What can be the implications of these arguments regarding situationist theory? First of all, one of essential issues for the situationist theory is the rejection of the work and necessity of the transcendence of art. If it is combined with the play element's prominent role in the formation of culture, these two approaches brought by Deamer might be applicable within the situationist theory.

In the previous chapter, situationist architecture is proposed as an action, not in terms of final product but rather processes, utopia in the making. Deamer's proposal to reconceptualize architect's role in the production of architecture is very much related with this. Architecture should come into prominence by the formal, material knowledge. This knowledge can manifest itself within the collective action. It is only by collective action that a practice that responds the necessities of use value.

Deamer concludes that the transitional period in the discipline allows for conceptualization of new structures for the practice of architecture.[187] This thesis can be regarded as an attempt to initiate such models through situationist theory.

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[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid., pp.75

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